

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HOUSING

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CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HOUSING

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October 31, 2024  
Start: 1:01 p.m.  
Recess: 4:05 p.m.

HELD AT: COUNCIL CHAMBERS - CITY HALL

B E F O R E: Chris Banks, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Alexa Avilés  
Erik D. Bottcher  
Darlene Mealy  
Chi A. Ossé  
Rafael Salamanca, Jr.  
Pierina Ana Sanchez

OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS ATTENDING:

Gale A. Brewer

A P P E A R A N C E S

Neil Barofsky, Co-Monitor of New York City  
Housing Authority

Matthew Cipolla, Co-Monitor of New York City  
Housing Authority

Brad Greenburg, Chief Compliance Officer at New  
York City Housing Authority

Eva Trimble, Chief Operating Officer at New York  
City Housing Authority

Keith Grossman, Executive Vice President for  
Support Services at New York City Housing  
Authority

Dylan Baker-Rice, Deputy Chief Asset and Capital  
Management Officer at New York City Housing  
Authority

Alix Cruz, tenant

Crystal G, tenant

Aixa Torres, President of Alfred E. Smith Houses

Zulay Velazquez, tenant

Christopher Leon Johnson, self

Caesar Godwall, tenant

Lucy Newman, Supervising Attorney of the Legal  
Aid Society's Public Housing Unit

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Darren Sealey, Program Manager for the Housing Resource Center at the Red Hook Community Justice Center

Sadie Gill-Frederick, tenant

Judy Wade, tenant

Alica Griggs, tenant

Manuel Martinez, Resident Council President of South Jamaica Houses and Queen's South District Chair

Cynthia Tibbs, Tenant Association President of the Westside Urban Renewal Brownstones

Dana Elden, President of St. Mary's Park Houses

Christina Chaise, Second Vice President of Resident Association Board at Ravenswood Houses

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Testing one, two.

3 Today's date is October 31, 2024. Today's hearing is  
4 Committee on Public Housing, being recorded in the  
5 Chambers by Keith Polite.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good afternoon and  
7 welcome to today's New York City Council hearing for  
8 the Committee on Public Housing.

9 At this time, we ask that you silence all  
10 electronic devices and at no time is anyone to  
11 approach the dais.

12 If you would like to sign up for in-  
13 person testimony or have any other questions during  
14 the hearing, please see the Sergeant-at-Arms.

15 Chair, we're ready to begin.

16 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [GAVEL] I'm calling  
17 this meeting to order. Good afternoon, everyone. I'm  
18 Council Member Chris Banks, the Chair of the  
19 Committee on Public Housing. I'm glad to be joined by  
20 my Colleagues, no Committee Members as yet, but  
21 they'll be here.

22 In 2019, the agreement between NYCHA and  
23 the City and HUD laid out clearly that there had to  
24 be top-to-bottom changes in how NYCHA operates and  
25 put a federal monitor in place to oversee that

2 change. Over the past five years, NYCHA has undergone  
3 serious changes under the federal monitorship with  
4 some real progress being made impacting NYCHA  
5 tenants' lives.

6 But even with that progress, there is  
7 still lots of work to do. As we start the second  
8 five-year monitorship program, this Committee wants  
9 to know clearly where NYCHA is in terms of their  
10 obligations under the HUD agreement as well as their  
11 plans for the future.

12 We are glad to be joined by the two new  
13 co-monitors who were appointed by HUD to hear what  
14 they have found as they've begun their work. I'm  
15 interested to know what they believe NYCHA needs to  
16 do to come into full compliance with the HUD  
17 agreement and position NYCHA in a place of stability  
18 for the future of all NYCHA residents.

19 Today's hearing will be full of goals,  
20 metrics, numbers, but I want to make sure that we  
21 also always keep in mind how these goals ultimately  
22 relate to the tenants of NYCHA developments and their  
23 lives. I look forward to hearing from the monitors,  
24 NYCHA, and NYCHA's tenants about how we can all keep  
25 NYCHA moving forward.

2 I would like to thank my staff, Michael  
3 Lambert, and the Public Housing Committee Staff,  
4 Jose, Connor, Dan, Nicholas, Christopher, and  
5 Charles, for all the work they've put into this  
6 hearing.

7 We will first hear today from Neil  
8 Barofsky and Matthew Cipolla, the co-monitors for  
9 NYCHA. Thank you.

10 NEIL BAROFSKY: Thank you, Chairman Banks,  
11 and it is a privilege to appear before you and the  
12 Committee today, and we look forward to working with  
13 you and your Staff over the next five years during  
14 the term of our monitorship. My name is Neil  
15 Barofsky, and with me is my Co-Monitor, Matt Cipolla,  
16 and we were appointed, as you noted, back in February  
17 of this year, the end of February, to serve this  
18 term.

19 I just wanted to start by giving you a  
20 little bit of background on us. Matt and I are  
21 partners at Jenner & Block Law Firm, where we are Co-  
22 Chairs of the firm's Monitorship Practice Group. We  
23 have a lot of experience doing monitorships. We've  
24 been appointed to be monitor by the United States  
25 Department of Justice, by U.S. Attorney's offices,

2 and also the New York State Department of Financial  
3 Services. We've monitored a variety of different  
4 types of institutions, including Credit Suisse, the  
5 financial services giant, the United Auto Workers  
6 Union, and the mining and training company, Glencore.  
7 For me, oversight began back in 2008 when I was  
8 appointed and confirmed as the first Special  
9 Inspector General for the Troubled Asset Relief  
10 Program, the TARP, the 700-billion-dollar bank  
11 bailout that occurred to the financial industry  
12 during the financial crisis.

13           In August of this year, we issued our  
14 first report for the NYCHA monitorship. This report  
15 gives an overview of NYCHA's performance and also  
16 reflects our overall approach to the monitorship and  
17 the core values that we intend to prioritize over the  
18 next five years. We'd like to briefly use the rest of  
19 our testimony to summarize those values and what we  
20 think our priorities will be going forward. For that,  
21 I'd like to turn it over to my colleague, Matt  
22 Cipolla.

23           MATTHEW CIPOLLA: Thank you. Good  
24 afternoon. I'll focus on the core values first. The  
25 first one is transparency. Our goal for our report is

2 to give the public and other stakeholders, such as  
3 you in this Committee, a one-stop shop to see exactly  
4 how NYCHA is progressing in meeting the goals that it  
5 committed to meeting in the HUD agreement. Our August  
6 report describes a mixed bag, including certain  
7 commitments, like addressing overall pest populations  
8 or heat failures in individual apartments that  
9 previously were not tracked or measured during the  
10 agreement's first five years. The report also  
11 describes certain areas in which NYCHA has made  
12 progress, such as its success in identifying and  
13 remediating lead paint in more than 10,000  
14 apartments. But in too many areas, NYCHA continues to  
15 struggle, including in its slow response times to  
16 make repairs, particularly when it comes to basic  
17 livability areas, such as mold and leaks.

18 Our second core value is accountability.  
19 Any future progress is going to demand that  
20 shortfalls and failures be identified and remedied.  
21 In our August report, we identified where NYCHA is  
22 falling short in meeting its sacred obligation to  
23 assure the safe and healthy living standards set  
24 forth in the HUD agreement for its residents, and we  
25 have proposed a series of priorities for NYCHA to



2 focus on to address these failures. In our future  
3 reporting, we will continue to closely monitor  
4 progress to ensure that NYCHA is held accountable  
5 when it fails, and we will hold ourselves to that  
6 same standard.

7           Third, and echoing your words, Chairman,  
8 we focus on the residents. Far too often, we've heard  
9 from you, from residents, and other stakeholders that  
10 they feel like residents and their concerns have not  
11 been adequately heard. We've heard that although  
12 NYCHA has made significant progress in certain areas  
13 under the agreement, its progress has not been felt  
14 by NYCHA residents, too many of whom continue to live  
15 in apartments with mold, leaks, and pests, or who  
16 have to live with elevators that don't work, or in  
17 apartments that are too cold in the winter. We have  
18 committed to residents to always view this  
19 monitorship through their eyes, understanding that  
20 for a resident, it doesn't matter if a boiler is  
21 replaced if their own individual apartment remains  
22 cold, or for a mobility-impaired resident, although  
23 they may appreciate that the response time to fix a  
24 broken elevator has shortened, it's cold comfort if  
25 they're unable to get in or out of their apartment

2 more than 12 times a year because of repeated  
3 elevator breakdowns.

4           Of course, our focus on residents would  
5 not be possible without their participation. For  
6 that, we want to recognize and thank the residents  
7 and resident leaders who have met with us, sent us  
8 emails, hosted our visits, attended our town hall,  
9 and called us to share their stories and experiences  
10 with NYCHA. Many of them have met with us at their  
11 developments, facilitated meetings with other  
12 residents, and showed us firsthand the state of their  
13 apartments, and we also want to make sure to thank  
14 NYCHA for their open, honest, and collaborative  
15 approach that they've shown us since day one.

16           Now I'll talk briefly about some of our  
17 priorities based on what we found in our initial  
18 report. As the end of the sixth year of the  
19 monitorship approaches in January, we look forward to  
20 working with NYCHA as it sets priorities for the  
21 coming year, and our work has identified several key  
22 areas where we believe progress is particularly  
23 urgent. The first is resident communication. Too  
24 often, a repair is not made because either NYCHA does  
25 not show up for a scheduled repair or because a

2 resident was not adequately informed or the  
3 appointment is not home. This has to be fixed.

4           Second is repair times. NYCHA residents  
5 often face long wait times for repair work due to a  
6 significant backlog of hundreds of thousands of work  
7 orders.

8           The third is performance. We have to  
9 raise the bar for the performance of NYCHA personnel  
10 agency-wide and ensure accountability for that  
11 performance.

12           The fourth is capital. The more quickly  
13 the capital funds can be deployed to install new  
14 elevators, to replace plumbing lines, or to deploy  
15 new boilers, the better position NYCHA will be to  
16 meet its various HUD agreement requirements and  
17 improve the lives of residents.

18           We will continue to work on these and  
19 other issues in the years to come. We thank you for  
20 having us today, and we look forward to answering  
21 your questions.

22           CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you. Thank you  
23 for your statements. I want to recognize we have  
24 Council Member Avilés who is present with us.

2 I'm going to begin my round of questions,  
3 and then I'm going to turn it over to some of my  
4 Members who may have questions.

5 As of today, what is your assessment on  
6 how well-positioned NYCHA is to come into compliance  
7 with the terms of the HUD agreement?

8 NEIL BAROFSKY: I think it's, probably  
9 have to put it in, oh, Santa Claus is here. I think  
10 you probably have to put it into sort of a couple  
11 different categories. I think there are some areas  
12 where NYCHA is very well-positioned to meet its  
13 obligations, others where it is not, and probably a  
14 third area which we just don't know. So, just to give  
15 you some examples, you know, NYCHA is doing a  
16 remarkable job in its lead abatement. As Matt  
17 mentioned, they've cleared 10,000 apartments, which  
18 is a really important milestone, and are on track to  
19 meeting the agreement's obligations to abate all lead  
20 in all apartments within the timeframe set forth.  
21 NYCHA is a little behind in some of the other big  
22 capital projects like elevator replacement and boiler  
23 replacement, but they're going to get it done. It's  
24 going to happen within the term of our monitorship  
25 for sure. Also in areas, assuming that there is

2 continued investment in some of the metrics that we  
3 describe in our report, response times for certain  
4 areas continue to improve year on year, and we feel  
5 like with the right amount of attention and support,  
6 NYCHA is going to fulfill its obligations in those  
7 areas, again, assuming that everything stays the  
8 course.

9 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Are there specific  
10 goals that you are more focused on after your first  
11 report because where NYCHA is in terms of the  
12 compliance?

13 NEIL BAROFSKY: There's certain areas of  
14 focus for sure. I would sort of split them into two  
15 areas, some of the operations areas and then some of  
16 them in more of the organizational change areas. So,  
17 from the operations areas, there are several really  
18 key metrics that have not yet been measured and  
19 reported out, and that's going to be one of our areas  
20 of focus in the next year. So, for example, NYCHA has  
21 done a commendable job when dealing with heat outages  
22 in buildings so when a boiler goes down and heat is  
23 lost to an entire building, NYCHA has had solid  
24 response times and improvement in that, but they

2 haven't been measuring and we haven't been reporting  
3 on what happens to individual apartments.

4 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Right.

5 NEIL BAROFSKY: So, for example, a boiler  
6 goes out, right, that's going to impact a whole bunch  
7 of apartments. A radiator goes out, that's only going  
8 to impact one apartment. But the agreement foresees  
9 and includes metrics and performance goals to deal  
10 with individual apartments as well so that's an  
11 example of one of the areas that we're currently  
12 working with NYCHA right now to develop those metrics  
13 and to be able to measure them, and then we'll be  
14 able to see how they're doing and to help them  
15 improve.

16 On the organizational change side, these  
17 are some of the bigger cross-cutting issues that  
18 aren't going to get solved in a day and, as Matt  
19 mentioned during his testimony, these are areas like  
20 resident communication, like pushing forward to  
21 putting more responsibility into the developments  
22 through the neighborhood model, holding its employees  
23 accountable through things like performance reviews.  
24 Those are sort of bigger picture areas that, you  
25 know, NYCHA recognizes has to improve that we're

2 really going to focus on working with them so  
3 basically those are the things that don't impact just  
4 heat or just plumbing or just lead or just pests, but  
5 when they're improved, NYCHA's numbers will improve  
6 across the board.

7 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Let me recognize  
8 present with us is Council Member Chi Ossé and  
9 Council Member Sanchez.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: Council Member Claus  
11 today.

12 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Oh, Council Member  
13 Claus, I stand corrected.

14 While we are going to talk to NYCHA about  
15 some of the more numerical metrics the agreement  
16 requires, what does NYCHA have to do with the  
17 organizational level to meet the requirements of the  
18 agreement?

19 NEIL BAROFSKY: It really is along the  
20 lines of what I was talking about before, and I'll go  
21 into a little bit more detail with your question. So,  
22 like organizational, some of the big cross-cutting  
23 organizational changes, if I could use an anecdote to  
24 sort of lay out where our thinking is on this. One of  
25 the things that we do is we have several experts who

2 work with NYCHA frequently, and one of our pest  
3 experts will shadow NYCHA exterminators when they go  
4 out and do their work, and one of his recent reports  
5 to us, he went out with a NYCHA exterminator, and the  
6 exterminator was supposed to have six apartments they  
7 were supposed to treat that day and he was only able  
8 to get into one because the other five, no one was  
9 home when he knocked. The same expert has seen NYCHA  
10 exterminators sometimes not understand or be properly  
11 trained and therefore not implement the most  
12 effective pest control, which means inevitably it's  
13 not going to treat the problem, and that's going to  
14 require more resources for a follow-up visit, or  
15 sometimes the person is well-trained but just doesn't  
16 do a good job. And I use this anecdote because I  
17 think it points to where the areas of focus need to  
18 be. Resident communication and having the  
19 infrastructure and technological capability to have  
20 more effective resident communication is just of  
21 paramount importance. From the resident's  
22 perspective, which as Matt noted is really a hallmark  
23 of what we're doing, there is nothing that we hear  
24 more in the sense of not just despair but of  
25 humiliation, really deep emotional understanding, and



2 it's understandable. If you take a day off from work  
3 because you think your apartment is going to get  
4 prepared and you lose a day of pay and NYCHA doesn't  
5 show up because of a communication snafu, it's  
6 devastating for the resident, but it's also a  
7 tremendous loss of resources for NYCHA. They're  
8 paying this exterminator to do that work, and they  
9 can't get in to do their job so that's one area.

10           Training. You have to have adequate  
11 training so that when you make the visit and get in  
12 to the apartment, you don't have to go back to re-fix  
13 or re-treat something so that's really important,  
14 organizational change.

15           And then accountability. NYCHA has to be  
16 in a position where it can clearly and easily  
17 identify its low performers and either get them the  
18 training they need or get them the discipline that  
19 they need so that they can adequately serve the  
20 residents and get the job done so those are some of  
21 the big cross-cutting areas, and I would just add to  
22 that keeping the push forward with the neighborhood  
23 model, which is moving more decentralized control  
24 developments so that the people who are in the  
25 development, running the development, have more

2 control over their development and can be quicker and  
3 more reactive to respond to residents' needs. I would  
4 say those are the areas probably organizational-wise  
5 that we're most focused on.

6 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you. In your  
7 first report, you say that the lack of funding is  
8 often pointed at as the main challenge facing NYCHA,  
9 but that NYCHA can make up for the change in funding  
10 to organizational and efficiency improvements. While  
11 I do think that NYCHA has been underfunded by all  
12 levels of government and we should dictate more funds  
13 to NYCHA, can you give us one or two examples of the  
14 type of inefficiencies that you think NYCHA can take  
15 advantage of?

16 NEIL BAROFSKY: Sure. I want to say how  
17 much we agree with you, Chairman. To say that NYCHA  
18 can become more efficient is not to in any way take  
19 away from the fact of the desperate need for  
20 additional capital funding. These buildings are way  
21 past their use-by date. A lot more can be done within  
22 the existing budget, but the existing budget will  
23 never be enough to get the level that is necessary  
24 and that the residents deserve. We agree with that.

2           One example I would say is the one I just  
3 used. If someone is going to go out on their day to  
4 do a number of repairs and they can only get in one  
5 out of six, well, gee, if you get them two out of  
6 six, you've just doubled their productivity. If they  
7 can get into three out of six apartments, you've  
8 tripled it. These are the types of things that we're  
9 looking at. We've had anecdotal evidence of workers  
10 who aren't showing up to a job or are not working a  
11 full day or aren't performing at the level that's  
12 necessary. Again, if you can get the most out of the  
13 workers and employees, that, too, will create more  
14 efficiencies within the existing budget. I think  
15 those are the types of things.

16           Then the investment in IT, because the IT  
17 reform, whether it comes to resident communication,  
18 whether it comes to fully automating some of the  
19 behind-the-scenes work and paperwork, that's also  
20 going to create more efficiency. You're going to get  
21 more bang for your buck. I think those are some of  
22 the areas that we're focused on.

23           CHAIRPERSON BANKS: You would agree that  
24 there's been scenarios or situations where residents

2 have taken off from work and there's been a no-show  
3 by NYCHA?

4 NEIL BAROFSKY: Absolutely. It is a  
5 recurring problem that we hear.

6 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Constantly, yes.

7 NEIL BAROFSKY: Anecdotally, it is  
8 something that we... there are certain things that when  
9 we meet with residents and talk to residents that  
10 always come up. In fact, we were actually visiting  
11 development, and I think it was the Vice President of  
12 the tenant association we were meeting with. She had  
13 taken the day off from work and had a leak underneath  
14 her sink. As we were meeting with the property  
15 manager, she mentions, yeah, I took off from work  
16 today and no one ever showed. We witnessed it. Matt  
17 and I witnessed it that day. It is a recurring  
18 problem. We're going to work with NYCHA. We're  
19 talking about doing analytics so we can get a true  
20 understanding of the scope of the problem. This is a  
21 problem that we're going to work with NYCHA to solve.  
22 NYCHA wants to solve it. Just to be very clear, and  
23 Matt mentioned this, NYCHA has been incredibly  
24 cooperative with us. We do truly believe that the  
25 senior management there wants to solve these

2 problems. It's not a question of negligence or lack  
3 of commitment. We believe we will get this solved  
4 with them.

5 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: I would hope so. The  
6 monitor is tasked to assist NYCHA to seek regulatory  
7 relief from HUD, the City of New York, the State of  
8 New York, has NYCHA identified or flagged the  
9 regulations they need relief from?

10 MATTHEW CIPOLLA: Yes, there is one I can  
11 think of. In performing maintenance work that may  
12 disturb lead paint, New York City law allows for the  
13 use of a special type of paper that sort of seals off  
14 the work area to make sure that the resident is not  
15 exposed to the potential lead hazard and the work can  
16 continue, but the resident doesn't have to vacate the  
17 apartment. HUD regulations don't allow the use of  
18 that so we have had discussions with NYCHA, with our  
19 lead expert, with HUD, about potentially getting some  
20 relief there because it would allow NYCHA to perform  
21 the work less expensively, relieve the residents from  
22 having to vacate their apartments, but still maintain  
23 safety for everyone.

24

25

2 I just want to be clear that doesn't  
3 apply to abatement. Abatement work still would  
4 require the resident to leave.

5 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: How do these  
6 regulations impede NYCHA?

7 MATTHEW CIPOLLA: They certainly can slow  
8 work. Understandably, folks don't want to leave their  
9 apartments. It may lead people to not seek repairs  
10 that might cause them to have to leave so if we can  
11 make sure that we work out a solution that's  
12 acceptable to HUD and safe for everyone, we think  
13 that could be a potential benefit not just to  
14 residents but to NYCHA as well.

15 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. What support do  
16 you think NYCHA needs from the city, state, and  
17 federal government to accomplish the goals set forth  
18 by the agreement?

19 NEIL BAROFSKY: I think first and foremost  
20 it obviously is as much financial support as they can  
21 receive. Again, we're going to work with NYCHA, and  
22 NYCHA is committed to working with us, to squeeze as  
23 much juice out of the lemon as possible, but we know  
24 when you're talking about capital shortfalls in the

2 tens of billions of dollars, it's an underfunded and  
3 decades of disinvestment are felt.

4 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Do you have the exact  
5 number of the capital shortfall?

6 NEIL BAROFSKY: We do not.

7 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Because I've heard  
8 different numbers.

9 NEIL BAROFSKY: I think one of the things  
10 that we hope to bring to the table is that there has  
11 been, and we've heard this as well, some amount of  
12 skepticism surrounding some of these numbers, whether  
13 they're inflated or too small or too big, and whether  
14 they're necessary if you can have the type of  
15 efficiency gains, is NYCHA in a position to deploy  
16 that capital in a timely and efficient and effective  
17 manner? We've heard all of those questions, and one  
18 of the things that we're going to try to do and seek  
19 to do is to answer those questions. We're currently  
20 doing a review, for example, of how NYCHA receives  
21 and spends the City capital and to see if there's any  
22 areas that we can improve the efficiency and make it  
23 a better process, a process that moves more quickly.  
24 That will be one of the things that we do so that we  
25 can answer those questions when people have them.

2 Same thing with efficiency. A question of  
3 how much more resources NYCHA needs is against where  
4 it is today, but what would it be versus a NYCHA that  
5 is operating at peak efficiency and is making the  
6 most out of every penny that it has? Those types of  
7 things, those questions, we think would be really  
8 important to answer so that we can better answer your  
9 question and the question of so many people who want  
10 to support NYCHA but do have some of these concerns.  
11 We want to support those asking those questions to  
12 get those answers.

13 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Before we proceed,  
14 we've been joined by Council Member Brewer and  
15 Council Member Bottcher.

16 Could you share what are some of the  
17 potential roadblocks that you foresee for NYCHA when  
18 it comes to the HUD agreement?

19 MATTHEW CIPOLLA: Sure. Neil mentioned one  
20 of them, which is going to be IT. NYCHA uses a very  
21 complex, older, highly customized IT system for its  
22 work orders. It's gotten a lot of value out of it. It  
23 works well with it. They've given us access to it,  
24 but at this point, further customization and further  
25 upgrades are going to require resources, time, and



2 attention. Some of the work that we aim to do that's  
3 tied to that can sometimes be delayed or require  
4 further work because of those IT limitations.

5 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: How often do you  
6 normally meet with the NYCHA team or NYCHA  
7 representatives?

8 MATTHEW CIPOLLA: We have meetings every  
9 day or nearly every day and certainly our team every  
10 day. It's been, as Neil said, very open and  
11 collaborative. NYCHA has a monitor liaison who we  
12 work with as a dedicated resource, but we interact  
13 directly with members of NYCHA senior leadership, the  
14 neighborhood administrators, borough VPs, caretakers,  
15 supers, really every level, and everyone has been  
16 open to meeting with us, we think honest in their  
17 feedback, and it's been a tremendous value to us.

18 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And you did state  
19 earlier that you are constantly meeting or having  
20 conversations with the tenant leadership?

21 MATTHEW CIPOLLA: Yes, so we have a  
22 variety of mechanisms for residents, both in  
23 leadership and outside of leadership, to interact  
24 with us. We have a website, nychamonitor.com. We have  
25 an email address and phone number. We have a

2 community advisory committee. We have a series of  
3 town halls. Individually, Neil and I meet with  
4 resident leaders at developments and they often  
5 introduce us to other members of their resident  
6 leadership and also people outside of leadership so  
7 there's a variety of means, and one of our goals, and  
8 certainly we want to continue to get better at this,  
9 is to make sure that everyone who wants to be heard  
10 is heard.

11 NEIL BAROFSKY: And I just want to say  
12 that the support from the residents has just been  
13 tremendous. This report reflects so much of the time  
14 that residents have taken out of their lives to meet  
15 with us and share with us their concerns, and it has  
16 as strong of influence on what we're doing as  
17 anything else and so we just want to really express  
18 our deep appreciation for those resident leaders who  
19 take out a lot of time to work with us and help us do  
20 our job.

21 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: What is your  
22 interaction with the RAD-PACT converted developments  
23 as far as the tenant leadership?

24 MATTHEW CIPOLLA: Sure. So the agreement  
25 has specific provisions for our oversight of the

2 developments that go RAD-PACT. They're primarily in  
3 the areas of elevators, heat, and lead, and there are  
4 certain metrics that NYCHA has to hit in terms of  
5 updating, for example, boilers. I think it's 200.  
6 NYCHA is on track for, or has already completed the  
7 boiler and elevator, and we're in the process of  
8 verifying that so our teams that go to each  
9 development and do the type of monitoring and  
10 investigative work that's so important to get  
11 everyone the facts that they need are verifying that  
12 those metrics have been met. Then in terms of the  
13 lead, also we'll be going to those developments to  
14 verify that the lead abatement not only has been  
15 completed but is being completed in a legally  
16 compliant manner.

17 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: What has been your  
18 findings thus far in your interactions with those  
19 particular TA leaders? Can you give us some insight?

20 NEIL BAROFSKY: We've not had extensive  
21 contact with the TA leaders in the RAD-PACT,  
22 primarily because our role is, I mean, we would,  
23 obviously...

24 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Are you planning on?

2 NEIL BAROFSKY: Our role is very limited  
3 in RAD-PACT so it really is limited to making, as  
4 Matt said, it's making sure that the elevators that  
5 are specified in the agreement have been done, making  
6 sure the boiler..

7 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So it's more  
8 compliance.

9 NEIL BAROFSKY: It's really compliance in  
10 a couple of narrow areas, and so we're not out there  
11 doing the type of inspections, the type of  
12 interaction that we do with the non-RAD-PACT  
13 developments because our oversight is so limited.

14 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay, but I get the  
15 compliance aspect, but as far as it being  
16 comprehensive, the question more pointed is, are you  
17 speaking to residents of the RAD-PACT?

18 NEIL BAROFSKY: We're not having the same  
19 level of interaction, no. I mean, to be honest, it's  
20 more passive. So, if residents reached out to us, we  
21 would, of course, talk to them, but the proactive  
22 efforts that we were talking about as far as doing a  
23 town hall or going to visit a development, we're not  
24 doing that in the RAD-PACT, again, because our  
25 oversight there is very narrow and pretty tight.

2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: With your limited  
3 scope of oversight, would you consider doing some  
4 degree of a town hall or deeper dive into the RAD-  
5 PACT conversions with your limited narrow scope?

6 NEIL BAROFSKY: I mean, just to be honest,  
7 it would be very challenging in a world of limited  
8 resources to expend our resources where, again, you  
9 talk about issues like work order reform, are tenants  
10 getting their apartments repaired on time, what is  
11 the response for potential pest infestation,  
12 potential mold infestation, which is one of the  
13 reasons why we engage with this tenant engagement is  
14 to understand those problems. We have zero oversight  
15 over what happens with respect to those issues in  
16 those buildings and so we can certainly take it under  
17 consideration, but they're really outside of the  
18 agreement, 99 percent of the issues, and I think from  
19 a resource allocation, we would rather do a town hall  
20 to residents where we can hopefully have a positive  
21 impact on their experience, whereas at a RAD-PACT, we  
22 just don't have that oversight and that ability, to  
23 be honest. I don't want to make a false promise.

24 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: No, no, and I hear  
25 you, but it's also an obligation by NYCHA to provide

2 oversight over these particular RAD-PACT conversions.  
3 Am I correct?

4 NEIL BAROFSKY: Yes. And in those areas  
5 where our oversight overlaps, again, we're doing  
6 that, but it's a very narrow.

7 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And you said it's  
8 narrow to elevators, heat, and lead abatement.

9 MATTHEW CIPOLLA: Yes, that's right. Okay.

10 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: All right. I'll come  
11 back with questions.

12 We have Council Member Mealy who's  
13 actually on virtual, and I'm now going to proceed  
14 with allowing questions from members, and we'll have  
15 a Council Member Avilés start that round.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Hello. Good  
17 afternoon, I think. Good to see you all.

18 I guess I was curious about a couple of  
19 things. In terms of, you mentioned I know you have a  
20 community advisory board, and thank you for the  
21 invitations to attend those and the individual  
22 outreach that you all do. Have you all considered  
23 potentially inviting CCOP resident members of the  
24 NYCHA board and other kind of resident bodies to meet  
25 together to discuss issues around NYCHA because I've

2 discovered they never have actually sat in rooms  
3 together. They're resident bodies that are very  
4 separated and doing independent conversations.

5 NEIL BAROFSKY: We certainly will consider  
6 that. I think one of the things, to be clear, we're  
7 starting out, and we don't have all the good ideas,  
8 and so we welcome that type of input, and we'll  
9 certainly consider it, and we certainly, if we're not  
10 inviting the board to our CAC meetings, we should be.  
11 I think that's a really good suggestion and any way  
12 we can facilitate that type of resident NYCHA  
13 interaction is helpful. So, for example, we just, I  
14 think it was last week, we did a town hall out in the  
15 Rockaways, and NYCHA came, both the local property  
16 management as well as central, some of the folks that  
17 are here today, and it was just, you know, it was  
18 great bringing everyone together with us and, you  
19 know, from what we heard, it was a very spirited  
20 meeting to be clear and understandably, you know,  
21 residents were very angry and expressed that, but in  
22 the aftermath of that meeting, you know, so many  
23 residents came up to us and really appreciated the  
24 opportunity, not just to talk to us. I mean, frankly,  
25 I think we were a little bit of a sideshow. But to be

2 able to communicate directly with NYCHA management,  
3 as well as the people on their property so I think  
4 that's a fantastic idea, and we're going to look to  
5 continue to expand those types of meetings. I think  
6 you're right. It's impactful.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Yeah, I mean,  
8 there's so much work to be done, and NYCHA residents  
9 are nothing but spirited and resilient and deeply  
10 committed to making sure they live in dignified  
11 conditions.

12 In terms of the mold and leaks area, what  
13 are the particular strategies that you're all going  
14 to try to pursue to get NYCHA to improve their  
15 metrics on compliance there?

16 NEIL BAROFSKY: One of the key areas,  
17 frankly, is that there's even some of these mold and  
18 leak metrics that are not yet being measured, and so  
19 one of them, for example, is an obligation to reduce  
20 standing water within 48 hours, and so one of the  
21 first things that we did was taking a look at all the  
22 agreement metrics, and in particular seeing those  
23 that are included in the agreement but have not yet  
24 been measured and reported, and that was one that  
25 jumped out at us and so, as we dug into it, the



2 response was the reason why it's not being measured  
3 is there's a standard protocol for leaks that has  
4 been under development but not yet rolled out, and  
5 that's basically the guidebook for those making  
6 repairs on leaks so they know exactly what to do,  
7 what are the standard practices and procedures for  
8 addressing that and, once that is launched and it is  
9 automated, then you can capture data to measure and  
10 report out on standing water. So, that's a really  
11 important area to increase NYCHA's performance is  
12 getting that SP rolled out, and then we're going to  
13 have more data to be able to measure and then  
14 remediate.

15 I think the second key area that we've  
16 seen so far is training. Training is really, really  
17 important in mold remediation, and it's an area that  
18 we think there could be significant improvement, and  
19 training is such a force multiplier when you talk  
20 about resources. For a little bit of what I was  
21 discussing earlier, if NYCHA deploys one of its  
22 precious resources, one of its workers to go out and  
23 clean up mold and it's not done well or effectively  
24 or completely, you've just wasted a resource because  
25 somebody else is going to have to come back and fix

2 it. NYCHA has made improvements here, to be clear,  
3 but there's a lot of runway here for better  
4 improvements and better performance by NYCHA staff,  
5 particularly when it comes to training that I think  
6 can help support these numbers.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Thank you for  
8 that. Just to take one quick step backwards, and  
9 apologies if I missed it in your earlier testimony.  
10 How many staff does the monitor employ?

11 NEIL BAROFSKY: You know what, I don't  
12 have... Maybe I'll just take a step back and talk about  
13 our structure.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Yeah, that would  
15 be great.

16 NEIL BAROFSKY: We're a law firm, and our  
17 staff, I would guess, is around 20 attorneys?

18 MATTHEW CIPOLLA: 25.

19 NEIL BAROFSKY: 25 attorneys who are  
20 working on this matter. We also work with various  
21 vendors. We have Turner and Townsend and..

22 MATTHEW CIPOLLA: Quadel.

23 NEIL BAROFSKY: Quadel, and I don't have  
24 those precise numbers. Do you have a sense, Matt?

2           MATTHEW CIPOLLA: Quadel is about 15 or  
3 20, and I think Turner and Townsend is about the same  
4 number, and what we've tried to do is bring in people  
5 who are experts at monitoring and investigating  
6 because we need for our work to bring in trust. We've  
7 tried to bring in experts in public housing and  
8 inspections because we want to make sure that the  
9 work we're doing is accurately reporting on HUD  
10 regulations and all the things that NYCHA needs to be  
11 doing. We've brought in experts in capital because  
12 also we need to be making sure that the capital funds  
13 are being deployed well, and then more part-time  
14 experts but who we consult when we need something  
15 like advice on pest management or lead abatement or  
16 some of the more highly technical matters. So, a very  
17 core goal of ours is bring in the best people that we  
18 can because this should be done by people who are  
19 really experts because that's what it's going to take  
20 to get the job done.

21           NEIL BAROFSKY: But we'll get you the  
22 precise numbers after this hearing if that's okay.

23           COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Yeah, great. Thank  
24 you. We'll appreciate that, especially since you're  
25 new and I'd love to understand where you expect to

2 maybe build out and I suppose as you're building out  
3 your plan, that will evolve.

4           So, going right back to another question,  
5 Chair, this will be my last one. So, I represent a  
6 development in Red Hook, which is the second largest  
7 NYCHA development in New York City, and it is one of  
8 the, I think, I forget how many, that has undergone a  
9 Sandy Resiliency construction project. In fact, there  
10 was a City Limits article that came out, I think,  
11 yesterday about the travails of these major  
12 resiliency projects, half-a-billion-dollar project 12  
13 years later. Definitely progress and a lot of  
14 complications, I think things people could not  
15 anticipate, but really profound frustration by the  
16 residents of the conditions that they've been living  
17 in that are everything from just eating dust all day  
18 because there's mountains of, you know, soil  
19 everywhere to having nowhere to go and a phone full  
20 of rats actually climbing chain link fence, which I  
21 never knew actually happened. We're all working  
22 through them. I guess what I was curious about is  
23 given the pillar areas for the monitor, how does the  
24 monitor handle the overlay of a project of this kind

2 of magnitude in their kind of investigation and  
3 monitoring?

4 MATTHEW CIPOLLA: Yeah, it's a great  
5 question. I think it fits in with one of our values,  
6 which is not to look at things as pillars as much as  
7 possible. I mean, obviously it's an important thing  
8 to be able to tell you the answer for a heat metric,  
9 what is it, but for these types of issues like these  
10 Sandy projects or some of the things Neil mentioned,  
11 you have to look at it broader than that. So, when we  
12 do this type of work, one of the value adds that  
13 we're trying to bring is looking at the data across  
14 the various areas to make sure that if it's having an  
15 impact on pests, we're not looking at pests in  
16 isolation. We're also looking at how the capital is  
17 being deployed and is it on schedule. We're also  
18 looking at whether exterior work is being done for  
19 lead abatement or pest management, but the point is  
20 we want to bring all of those things together, and  
21 that is a core value for us.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: So there's no  
23 distinguishing between, I guess, the federal funding  
24 stream work that is being deployed, let's say, on the  
25 campus and what is in NYCHA's pipeline? I guess what

2 I'm trying to get at is the monitor will be looking  
3 at all of those things as a collective.

4 MATTHEW CIPOLLA: Yeah, we're not thinking  
5 about where is the source of funding to improve a  
6 particular metric. We're looking at is the metric  
7 improving or not.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Right, and the  
9 accountability, though, right, is, well, it's the  
10 contractor, it's not NYCHA, and I think that's a  
11 place where we can drill down on.

12 NEIL BAROFSKY: Yes, I think, you know, it  
13 is NYCHA's, of course, responsibility to oversee its  
14 contractors, and so there is no... much like it is our  
15 responsibility to oversee our vendors, and if one of  
16 our vendors makes a mistake, it is the exact same  
17 thing as if Matt or I personally make the mistake,  
18 and I think NYCHA understands that.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Thank you. Thank  
20 you, Chair.

21 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you. We've been  
22 joined also by Council Member Salamanca, virtually,  
23 and we'll now allow Council Member Chi Ossé/Claus to  
24 ask questions.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: Thank you. Thank  
3 you, Chair, and thank you for being here today to  
4 testify for us.

5 I wanted to ask specific programmatic  
6 questions. I know that HUD's main responsibility is  
7 infrastructural upgrades. However, I have heard from  
8 several TA Presidents within my District. I do want  
9 to shout out Ms. Adorn as well as Ms. Johnson from  
10 both Sumner and Tompkins Houses. Obviously, the  
11 infrastructural upgrades and lack of funding for  
12 infrastructure is something that we really do  
13 appreciate from the monitor, but a concern that they  
14 raised is some of the programs that they have within  
15 their developments as well as the various different  
16 developments in my District, whether it's funding for  
17 TA meetings, family days, just any type of senior  
18 programs, youth programs that go into their  
19 developments. They were wondering if the federal  
20 monitor or the federal government in general is doing  
21 anything in that regard, whether it's advocacy for  
22 more funding in those programs, whether it's  
23 assessing the funding that already exists for those  
24 programs. I think that's something that wanted to be  
25 addressed during this hearing.

2 NEIL BAROFSKY: Yes, so that is an area  
3 that's outside of our jurisdiction as defined by the  
4 agreement, but what I would really strongly encourage  
5 tenant association leaders or, frankly, any resident  
6 to still contact us. Even though it's not within our  
7 jurisdiction and we don't have a role in it under the  
8 terms of the agreement, we'll find the right person.  
9 We do a lot of that facilitation of making sure that  
10 the person with an issue or a concern can find the  
11 right person at NYCHA or elsewhere, potentially here,  
12 so that their voice can be heard. Even if we can't  
13 deal with it because we just have no oversight or  
14 impact on it, we do try to help find the residents  
15 the right person so that they can be heard.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: I do hear and  
17 appreciate that, and I definitely will recommend to  
18 my constituents who reside in NYCHA... can I have a  
19 couple more minutes?

20 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: You may.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: Reside in NYCHA to  
22 reach out to the monitor when they have questions  
23 there. I think some of these TAs have frustrations  
24 with sometimes how slow the money can get to them for  
25 these programs. I guess I have a two-part question



2 now. The first part is why is it maybe outside of the  
3 jurisdiction of the monitor to assess the funding for  
4 these programs? And two, I think it's equally as  
5 important to assess the funding, advocacy for the  
6 funding for some of these infrastructure upgrades.  
7 It's as important as it is for some of these programs  
8 that take place in our developments, whether it's  
9 stronger TAs that are more willing and have more  
10 tools to interact with both you as well as NYCHA. I  
11 find them to be equally important, but I want to hear  
12 from maybe why this is not under the jurisdiction of  
13 the monitor.

14 NEIL BAROFSKY: Yes, and to be very clear,  
15 just because something is outside our jurisdiction  
16 doesn't mean it's not incredibly important.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: Sure, of course.

18 NEIL BAROFSKY: I mean, one of the real  
19 issues that NYCHA residents are dealing with, which  
20 we hear on a regular basis, is asbestos abatement,  
21 and that's something that we have zero...

22 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: How can we change  
23 that, though? How do we give you more oversight over  
24 some of these pressing problems that exist within...

2           NEIL BAROFSKY: So, we are a creature of  
3 contract. This monitorship was created when HUD and  
4 the City and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the  
5 Southern District of New York and NYCHA reached its  
6 settlement in 2019, and that agreement is what  
7 created this monitorship so we're not like... sometimes  
8 there are court-appointed monitors. We serve as  
9 monitors in a number of different types of  
10 arrangements. This is truly a civil contract that was  
11 signed by these different governmental entities, and  
12 so when they did that, they said this is what you do  
13 monitor, and anything that they don't say this is  
14 what you do, we don't do. We don't have jurisdiction.  
15 As I said, we don't blind ourselves to these other  
16 issues, and they are, of course, impactful. Because  
17 they're impactful on the residents, they're impactful  
18 on the overall work that we do, but we can't... there  
19 are certain areas, the only way we can help is  
20 helping bring attention by introducing the tenant or  
21 making an inquiry, which we do, and look, we've had  
22 some real successes in certain areas where just  
23 facilitating certain meetings and getting certain  
24 attention to issues, even though they're arguably  
25 outside of our jurisdiction, but the only way really

2 to change that is to change the agreement, and so the  
3 parties to the agreement, which would be the  
4 Department of Justice, HUD, the City, and NYCHA would  
5 have to reform the agreement.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: Thank you so much  
7 for the time, Chair. Would love your contact after  
8 this hearing just to see if we could coordinate some  
9 of those meetings in the future with my TAs.

10 NEIL BAROFSKY: We'd be happy to  
11 facilitate.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: Thank you, Chair.

13 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Now I recognize  
14 Council Member...

15 CHAMBERS: (INAUDIBLE)

16 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Order, guys. Order.  
17 Council Member Bottcher.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Hi. Question  
19 relating to elevator repair, and you may or may not  
20 have the answer to this question, but what we hear is  
21 that the issue with respect to elevator outages is  
22 not necessarily the lack of personnel to repair the  
23 elevators. It's a parts issue. Is that accurate, and  
24 what efforts are underway to ensure that this  
25 shortage of parts is addressed, and why is it that

2 NYCHA, after all these years, doesn't have an  
3 adequate supply of parts on hand for elevator repair?

4 NEIL BAROFSKY: I could tell you what  
5 NYCHA has informed us, but I think this is a question  
6 that's probably best addressed to NYCHA directly. I  
7 don't think that we've heard or found that part  
8 shortages is what's driving a lot of the elevator  
9 issues, but my understanding that to the extent that  
10 there are difficulties with respect to parts, it's  
11 because a lot of these elevators are so old and are  
12 no longer being manufactured, but NYCHA has a pretty  
13 robust program of salvaging its elevators, of  
14 fabricating parts, but I think the next panel could  
15 probably better address your question.

16 To us, one of the areas where we think  
17 that the elevator performance can be improved is by  
18 expanding preventative maintenance. NYCHA has done  
19 some pilots of preventative maintenance where instead  
20 of just repairing broken elevators, you go with the  
21 elevators that are still working and doing the  
22 necessary work to make sure that they don't go out of  
23 service, but that is not a parts-driven challenge.  
24 That is a resource-driven challenge. You just need  
25 more people to do that than NYCHA can currently

2 afford, but to its credit, it is seeking to expand  
3 that program in the next year. It's a priority that  
4 we're working on, and I think that will be, elevator  
5 replacement is ultimately the solution, right,  
6 because these are old, out-of-date elevators, but in  
7 the meantime, until that capital comes in and that  
8 can be done, really that type of maintenance is  
9 really important, but on the parts, I'm not aware of  
10 the issue, but I think it's important to address that  
11 to NYCHA directly. They can give you some more  
12 insight on that.

13 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Bottcher, are you  
14 done? So now we're going to move to Council Member  
15 Brewer.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you very  
17 much. First of all, I concur with you. The residents  
18 are wonderful, and I think NYCHA is trying. It's just  
19 really rough. I'm now swamped. Every tenant leader in  
20 Manhattan is watching this hearing, just so you know,  
21 and they all want to meet with you, just throwing  
22 that out, right? 10, 15 emails right here.

23 NEIL BAROFSKY: We never say no.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, well,  
25 they're all going to be organizing to talk to you.

2           So I know, because I knew your previous  
3 monitor, so I have a sense of where you are in terms  
4 of what you can and cannot do, so I'm going to try to  
5 just talk about some things that hopefully fit into  
6 that. One of them is just the vacant apartments.  
7 There's thousands of vacant apartments, and some of  
8 them maybe need too much. That's question number one,  
9 because they do have pests, they do have mold, they  
10 do have all these things in them so I want to know  
11 what, if anything, we can do about them. I have no  
12 idea. I know one building, I have a lot of, on the  
13 Upper West Side, a lot of NYCHA, and one complex has  
14 40, the management told me, 40 vacant apartments, and  
15 I don't know how many citywide, 6,000? That's the  
16 number I've heard. Second question is, I am a strong  
17 believer in moving homeless families into the  
18 building. Again, how does this fit into your concern?  
19 Sometimes they don't have any services. They just  
20 come in without support. Social services is not on  
21 your list, but support so that that family operates  
22 in a way that is supportive of the other families,  
23 and I don't want to chastise people who are homeless.  
24 Many of them are wonderful, but it's not easy to  
25 bring in to this complex so there are a lot of issues

2 that fit into your list that family experiences, and  
3 so that's the question that I think should at least  
4 be on your agenda.

5           The other thing is just trash. Oh, my  
6 gosh. I don't know. Sometimes there's no place to  
7 place it inside the building. It ends up on the  
8 street, and then all the other neighbors complain, as  
9 you can imagine, and that brings in your pests and  
10 all your other issues so I could go on, but those are  
11 the...

12           CHAIRPERSON BANKS: You may continue.

13           COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: A long list, but  
14 those seem to fit in. Are you dealing with any of  
15 those topics?

16           NEIL BAROFSKY: I think just to start with  
17 the last one, waste management and trash. That is  
18 very much an area of focus. One of the things that  
19 NYCHA is working on, and again, we were speaking  
20 earlier, my colleague was talking about IT roadblocks  
21 and overcoming...

22           COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I heard that.  
23 Yeah, I heard it.

24           NEIL BAROFSKY: And so I think that's an  
25 area where we're really working with NYCHA is it's in

2 the process of launching an inspections program to  
3 deal with identifying when trash and other waste  
4 issues are there and then automating a response so it  
5 automates a work order and so it can be promptly  
6 addressed. Trying to bring a little bit of the 21st  
7 century into addressing these issues.

8 I think the other problem that we've  
9 heard anecdotally, especially talking to tenant  
10 leaders about trash, is part of it is NYCHA being  
11 slow sometimes to clean it up, but also part of it is  
12 tenant-driven, and I think...

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Right.

14 NEIL BAROFSKY: The issues revolving in  
15 lease enforcement and addressing the core issues of  
16 certain tenants who are not respectful of their  
17 neighbors or of the people working at the  
18 developments, it is a thornier and difficult problem.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: It is very  
20 difficult.

21 NEIL BAROFSKY: That we are just starting  
22 to try to wrap our arms around and work with NYCHA to  
23 address, but it is something that progress has to be  
24 made because it's not safe, right, and it does



2 frustrate the ability to manage the pest populations  
3 and just basic livability, right?

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I'm very aware of  
5 the problem. Solutions are more challenging. The  
6 chutes are too small. That's the other issue. I could  
7 go on and on. I've been doing this work for a very  
8 long time. The chutes are too long. Manhattan is  
9 particularly difficult because there's very little  
10 outside space compared to other developments that  
11 have big campuses, etc., etc. so I would love to work  
12 with you on it, but I can say, and then the Teamsters  
13 are wonderful. You've got to work with them also.  
14 That's who puts it out. So, okay, solutions are hard  
15 to come by, but we should definitely work on it.

16 NEIL BAROFSKY: Yes, I was just going to  
17 say, we would really welcome input from you and your  
18 Staff on any ideas that you have that we can, you  
19 know, bring to NYCHA and work with NYCHA because,  
20 again, we're all swimming in the same direction on  
21 this one.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. The vacant  
23 apartments, which also produce some of your  
24 challenges. What are you doing about them?

2 NEIL BAROFSKY: Currently, we're not doing  
3 anything about them, but, you know, again, this is an  
4 issue that we will take a close look to see how it  
5 impacts our work, whether or not there is a  
6 jurisdictional hook for us there.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, and the only  
8 reason I think, because I assume they have mold in  
9 some cases. I know they do, in fact, and they  
10 definitely have pests because when you leave an  
11 apartment vacant for, I don't know, five years, let's  
12 say, you know who's going to move in.

13 NEIL BAROFSKY: Yeah. It has not yet been  
14 an area of our focus, but we thank you for bringing  
15 it to our attention.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, and then I  
17 guess, stretch, is families who move in who don't  
18 have enough support. I mean social service. That's  
19 not your area. I got it. I know, but the other issue  
20 that you mentioned about just people knowing what to  
21 do, that is part of your problem so it's something to  
22 think about, to put on a side list because it's not  
23 happening now, and I'm a big supporter of NYCHA  
24 staff. You know, I think Brian Honan walks on water  
25 and also the resident leaders, but it's tough, and so

2 you have a hard job. I appreciate you being here, but  
3 I hope you look a little bit bigger or larger than  
4 some of the topics because they all impact. Thank  
5 you.

6 NEIL BAROFSKY: Thank you so much.

7 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Just to follow up,  
8 vacancies.

9 NEIL BAROFSKY: It's just not something  
10 that we focused on, but it's now been raised and  
11 we'll take a look at it to see if there is a  
12 jurisdictional overlap or hook.

13 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Please.

14 NEIL BAROFSKY: To your point, if it is a,  
15 you know, we'll talk to our pest experts in  
16 particular. For example, if vacant apartments are  
17 spreading or responsible for increasing a pest  
18 infestation, that would obviously be something very  
19 much within our area of concern. If there's leaking  
20 pipes that are going unattended in a vacant apartment  
21 that's impacting other apartments, that would very  
22 much be in our area of concern so, again, thank you  
23 for bringing this to our attention. It's not an area  
24 that we've focused on before, but that's why we like  
25 having these hearings because we don't have a

2 monopoly on good ideas, and we really do appreciate  
3 the opportunity of hearing from folks who, frankly,  
4 have been focused on working on this for a lot longer  
5 than we have so thank you.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you. Don't  
7 forget about Manhattan.

8 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Getting back to...

9 NEIL BAROFSKY: It's my home, so I can't.

10 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you, Council  
11 Member Brewer.

12 Getting back to RAD-PACT, and I know you  
13 said you have a limited jurisdiction over the RAD-  
14 PACT converted developments. Will you take note of  
15 the conditions of the RAD-PACT developments during  
16 your tenure as a monitor?

17 NEIL BAROFSKY: You know, part of the work  
18 that we're doing in inspecting these and verifying  
19 what is going on in the RAD-PACT, so we're sending  
20 people out to these developments. I think it's  
21 completely understandable that since they're going,  
22 they keep their eyes open, and we can ask our  
23 inspectors to sort of report back on what they're  
24 seeing, and so I think that's an area where we can  
25 keep some tabs on the RAD-PACT. Again, if they're

2 going to check that a boiler is there, they don't  
3 have to blind themselves to everything else that's  
4 going around so we'll take that feedback of having a  
5 heightened sense of awareness of what's going on, and  
6 we can let you know what we're seeing.

7 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And if residents are  
8 bringing issues to you about the RAD-PACT  
9 conversions, how are you handling those? Are you just  
10 telling them, we have no jurisdiction over them?

11 NEIL BAROFSKY: I want to get back to you  
12 on this. I'm not aware of a lot of resident  
13 complaints or concerns being directed towards us in  
14 those developments.

15 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Not directed towards  
16 you.

17 NEIL BAROFSKY: What's that? So, I need to  
18 get back to you to answer that question of what, I  
19 don't, we never ignore a resident. We never tell a  
20 resident, your concern is outside of our  
21 jurisdiction, and therefore go find your own way. If  
22 it's not something that we can address, we pass it  
23 off to the right place, whether that's at NYCHA or  
24 wherever, but I don't have any specific information

2 for you right now because I'm just not aware of what  
3 that is.

4 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So in your narrow  
5 scope of elevators, heat, lead, if a resident comes  
6 to you and makes a complaint, a resident who resides  
7 in a RAD-PACT, makes a complaint about installation  
8 of an elevator, it being too small, the elevator not  
9 having a window when it had a window while it was  
10 under NYCHA, how would you address that?

11 NEIL BAROFSKY: In two ways, right, so the  
12 first, going to your point, is this an issue that is  
13 covered in the agreement? So, what is NYCHA's  
14 responsibility with respect to elevators that are  
15 part of developments that go RAD-PACT? We'd check  
16 that obligation, check our oversight of that  
17 obligation, see whether that issue is within the  
18 terms of the agreement and therefore part of our  
19 oversight. If the answer is yes, then we would  
20 proceed as with any tenant complaint of something  
21 that's within our oversight.

22 If it's not inside our oversight, we  
23 would find the right person to address that issue to,  
24 whether that's probably someone at NYCHA, maybe it's  
25 someone at the management company that's overseeing

2 it, and then we would pass that information off and  
3 then typically we would get an update from the  
4 resident as to whether that was successful or not  
5 successful, but that's basically what we do. If we  
6 can't help, we try to get help.

7 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Right. So, your role  
8 would be to be a referee in a sense or in a situation  
9 like that. I mean, really what I want to get to is  
10 exactly what role will you play in these situations  
11 where there are constant issues coming up and where  
12 there are constant complaints of the lack thereof of  
13 oversight by NYCHA when it comes to the RAD-PACTs.

14 MATTHEW CIPOLLA: I think I can give a  
15 more specific example. We did have a resident  
16 association raise an issue that ultimately related to  
17 security and they felt like the more neighborhood and  
18 development level NYCHA employees were not being  
19 responsive to their concerns, and the help that we  
20 were able to provide was bringing together the  
21 resident association leaders and more senior  
22 leadership at NYCHA to try to make sure that they  
23 have the access that they needed to get that to be  
24 heard, and so it's going to depend on the issue,

2 obviously, but oftentimes it's facilitating those  
3 types of communications and that type of attention.

4 NEIL BAROFSKY: More conduit than referee.

5 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: More conduit than  
6 referee.

7 NEIL BAROFSKY: But I would say, Chairman,  
8 our experience is, and Matt just gave an example, is  
9 that the NYCHA leadership is responsive and so if we  
10 got, for example, a series of complaints, again, we  
11 wouldn't ignore them, right? If there were consistent  
12 complaints all around a certain issue, even if it's  
13 an issue outside of our jurisdiction, we would make  
14 NYCHA leadership aware, hey, we think there's a real  
15 problem over here and bring it to their attention,  
16 and our experience, and again, it's limited because  
17 we've only been on the job for almost eight months  
18 now, is that they're responsive. They don't say, hey,  
19 monitor, keep your nose out of this, this is not  
20 having to do with your... like, we've never got, and  
21 again, I just want to say, like, they've been really  
22 cooperative, collaborative, and problem-solving, and  
23 so I would anticipate if something like this  
24 happened, we would be a conduit, but I would also,  
25 you know, expect that to the extent NYCHA has



2 anything that it can do in that situation, that they  
3 would address the problem.

4 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you. I just want  
5 to make sure that the monitor, that you're taking  
6 note of what's being, some of the issues and  
7 complaints that are coming from the RAD-PACT  
8 conversions, which has been an issue of contention  
9 throughout the entire city.

10 Thank you so much. That's the extent of  
11 my questions and the Members of the Committee. Thank  
12 you so much.

13 NEIL BAROFSKY: Thank you.

14 MATTHEW CIPOLLA: Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And we'll proceed to  
16 the next panel of NYCHA.

17 Swear them in.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: So, if you both could  
19 raise your right hand.

20 Do you affirm to tell the truth, the  
21 whole truth, and nothing but the truth in your  
22 testimony before this Committee, and to respond  
23 honestly to Council Member questions?

24 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Yes.

25 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: I do.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: You may proceed.

3 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: Okay.

4 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: You may proceed. Thank  
5 you.

6 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: Chair  
7 Banks, Members of the Committee on Public Housing,  
8 other distinguished Members of the City Council,  
9 NYCHA residents, community advocates, members of the  
10 public, good afternoon. I'm Brad Greenburg. I'm  
11 NYCHA's Chief Compliance Officer. I'm very pleased to  
12 be here and joined by Chief Operating Officer Eva  
13 Trimble and other members of NYCHA's team. Thank you  
14 for this opportunity to discuss how NYCHA is moving  
15 forward with our partners to transform the authority  
16 and become a better landlord for the hundreds of  
17 thousands of New Yorkers we serve.

18 I'd like to acknowledge today's testimony  
19 from Neil Barofsky and Matthew Cipolla. The Jenner  
20 and Block Monitor team is an important partner and  
21 together we're working to improve the quality of life  
22 for NYCHA families.

23 On the history of the HUD agreement and  
24 the monitorship, NYCHA and the City of New York  
25 signed the agreement with HUD in January 2019. The

2 agreement's overarching goal is to remedy deficient  
3 physical conditions in NYCHA properties and deliver  
4 for residents across the city. The agreement sets  
5 performance targets with specific deadlines for seven  
6 high-priority focus areas: lead-based paint, mold,  
7 heat, elevators, inspections, pests, and waste  
8 management. The work undertaken as part of the  
9 agreement is overseen by a third-party federal  
10 monitor. We also work every day with our federal  
11 partners in the U.S. Attorney's Office for the  
12 Southern District of New York and in the U.S.  
13 Department of Housing and Urban Development. We have  
14 a strong and productive relationship with the  
15 monitor, characterized by robust communication and  
16 collaboration. The monitor's team participates in  
17 regular staff meetings to discuss our efforts, and  
18 NYCHA leadership speaks frequently with the monitor  
19 team.

20 Today, I want to walk you through the  
21 agreement, give you some examples of how we have  
22 changed the way we do business to comply with federal  
23 law, and then provide you an update on the work we  
24 have been doing across the city to improve physical  
25

2 conditions at NYCHA properties. If we can go to the  
3 next slide.

4           First, as you can see on this slide too,  
5 the agreement is far-reaching. It required the  
6 installation of a federal monitor, and a key early  
7 advancement at the outset of the agreement was the  
8 establishment of three new departments and units at  
9 NYCHA. The Compliance Department, which I lead, the  
10 Environmental Health and Safety Department, and the  
11 Quality Assurance Unit. Crucially, these new teams  
12 have established programs for monitoring NYCHA's work  
13 at its developments, making recommendations for  
14 improvements, and then providing technical assistance  
15 to the development staff to improve performance. We  
16 continue to scale up these teams while using data-  
17 centered risk assessments, sampling, and field  
18 monitoring to ensure NYCHA's compliance with all  
19 local, state, and federal regulations, as well as  
20 internal policies and procedures.

21           We also established a department called  
22 Strategy and Innovation to track NYCHA's progress  
23 with meeting all the deadlines outlined in the HUD  
24 agreement. In support of this work, we built  
25 dashboards and other analytical reporting tools for

2 each pillar area. They provide an array of valuable  
3 metrics that guide our efforts. When we are not  
4 meeting any of the clearly defined data-driven  
5 benchmarks, the teams responsible develop plans to  
6 address these issues.

7           Also, on this slide, you can see that  
8 the City of New York agreed to provide an additional  
9 2.2 billion dollars in capital funds over the first  
10 10 years of the agreement. I'd also like to recognize  
11 our partners at the State level who have provided  
12 more than 1 billion dollars in capital funds since  
13 the agreement was signed to help us deliver some of  
14 the capital projects I'll discuss today.

15           As detailed on the next slide, on slide  
16 3, as part of the HUD agreement obligation to create  
17 an organizational plan, NYCHA developed a  
18 transformation plan issued in March 2021 followed by  
19 two implementation plans issued in 2022 and 2023.  
20 These plans include a set of strategies to improve  
21 the resident experience and set the agency on a path  
22 to a stronger future. The plans outline changes to  
23 NYCHA's governance and leadership structure, property  
24 management systems, and central support functions.  
25 For instance, we implemented the neighborhood model,

2 pushing resources and decision-making authority away  
3 from the central office and into 29 neighborhood  
4 offices across the city. We also overhauled our  
5 processes related to repair and work order  
6 management, janitorial work schedules and  
7 cleanliness, and lease enforcement issues at the  
8 development. At the same time, we are making new  
9 investments in staff training so we can deliver on  
10 our mission.

11           Now I'd like to take you through some of  
12 the progress NYCHA has made since signing the HUD  
13 agreement. In order to comply with the agreement and  
14 improve performance, NYCHA has redesigned its  
15 business process so our staff use handheld devices on  
16 our work order system in each of the key areas of  
17 focus. As you can see on the next slide on slide 4,  
18 this shows you kind of a portion of what we have  
19 built in our work order system so we can comply with  
20 federal rules around lead-based paint. NYCHA now  
21 collects data every day so we can be as protective as  
22 possible when it comes to lead-based paint in NYCHA  
23 apartments where children live or visit. Our workers'  
24 handheld devices, which you see screenshots of on the  
25 screen, include information on whether a child lives

2 or visits the apartment where they are working, and  
3 it provides surface-by-surface testing results for  
4 that specific apartment. We've also built our system  
5 to flag apartments where lead-safe work practices are  
6 mandatory, including apartments where a child lives.  
7 If an apartment is flagged, our workers then see  
8 mandatory prompts before beginning work so they  
9 adhere to lead-safe work practice requirements when  
10 they are disturbing lead-based paint. In this  
11 process, they can review and select the components  
12 they are working on that are positive for lead.

13 As you can see on the next slide, on  
14 slide 5, a foundation of our work has been to test  
15 more than 100 surfaces in each NYCHA apartment,  
16 beginning with apartments where children reside so we  
17 know exactly which surfaces contain lead-based paint.  
18 This information is uploaded into our work order  
19 system in a way that is easy to understand so our  
20 staff always has access to this critical information.  
21 Most importantly, as you can see on slide 6 on the  
22 next slide, once we have that precise surface-by-  
23 surface testing, NYCHA and its PACT partners can then  
24 abate and permanently remove lead-based paint from  
25 the surface that tested positive at 0.5 milligrams

2 per square centimeter, which is the strictest  
3 standard in the country. To date, NYCHA and its PACT  
4 partners have delivered lead-free apartments across  
5 100 percent of the apartments at Williamsburg Houses  
6 and more than 87 percent of the apartments at Harlem  
7 River Houses. These two properties were named in the  
8 original complaint filed against NYCHA. They were  
9 built in the 1930s and were the two properties with  
10 the most pervasive use of lead-based paint.

11 NYCHA's TEMPO program has also tested  
12 more than 86,000 apartments at the City's standard  
13 and determined that 48,000 apartments are negative  
14 for lead-based paint. Recently, our TEMPO program hit  
15 an important milestone. We've also now abated via  
16 removal and delivered 10,000 lead-free apartments  
17 that previously tested positive in the public housing  
18 portfolio. The work to fully abate and remove lead-  
19 based paint from the NYCHA portfolio, which is  
20 unquestionably the largest residential lead-based  
21 paint abatement program ever undertaken, is happening  
22 at a fast pace. We are testing more than 700  
23 apartments a week and abating around 400 apartments a  
24 month in our public housing portfolio.



2           The pictures on slide 7 on the next slide  
3 show what it takes to deliver a lead-free apartment  
4 in some cases. In these cases, we are removing paint  
5 down to the substrate and then rebuilding the  
6 apartment or the component impacted. This work is  
7 critical to ensure the safety of residents and is a  
8 core obligation of the agreement.

9           Slide 8, the next slide, is a snapshot of  
10 one portion of our dashboard to report on NYCHA's  
11 compliance with the obligation to restore heat to  
12 residents. As you can see, we have made progress each  
13 year. In the 2021-2022 heat season, we had 564  
14 outages with an average duration of 8.99 hours. The  
15 next year, we lowered that to 384 outages with an  
16 average duration of 8.22 hours, and last heat season  
17 was our best performance yet. We had 303 outages with  
18 an average duration of 7.21 hours. Any outage is an  
19 issue, but bending this curve and ensuring we respond  
20 quickly is essential to ensure residents get the  
21 consistent heat service they deserve.

22           Slide 9 is a snapshot of our dashboard  
23 reporting on our progress to replace more than 500  
24 boilers across the NYCHA portfolio, which is also an  
25 agreement requirement, and it uses both our capital

2 and PACT programs. To date, our capital team has  
3 replaced 128 boilers and forecast that they are on  
4 pace to meet the requirement that 297 boilers be  
5 replaced by 2026. Our PACT program has already  
6 exceeded the goal to replace 200 boilers, having  
7 replaced 237 boilers across the program.

8           Slide 10, the next slide, shows some  
9 pictures of these new boiler plants, including a new  
10 boiler plant at a PACT property, Boulevard Houses,  
11 and new boilers at NYCHA-managed properties, Coney  
12 Island Houses and Cypress Hills. In many cases, these  
13 new systems are easier for our staff to manage  
14 because we also are decoupling hot water systems or  
15 providing automated controls. Regardless, we are  
16 replacing decades-old, outdated boilers with new  
17 heating equipment that provides more reliable  
18 service.

19           Slide 11, the next slide, shows a  
20 snapshot of some visualizations we have developed to  
21 report on the agreement's requirements related to  
22 mold in residents' apartments. The first graphic  
23 shows that we have, thanks to our mold buster  
24 standard procedure developed with our partners in the  
25 BIAS case, sustained a low reoccurrence rate,

2 ensuring mold is not coming back to a residence  
3 apartment soon after work is initially completed. The  
4 second graphic shows we are struggling to meet the  
5 requirement to remediate mold conditions within 7 or  
6 15 days, depending on the complexity of the case. But  
7 what it also shows, when you look at the green bar,  
8 is that the number of mold complaints from residents  
9 has steadily declined month over month since peaking  
10 in 2021. In 2021, we peaked at more than 1,500 mold  
11 complaints a month from residence. This year, we are  
12 steadily around 600 mold complaints per month,  
13 peaking in the more humid summer months at around 900  
14 complaints. Again, any one complaint is a problem,  
15 and we need to continue to respond faster and more  
16 effectively every day, but bending this curve and  
17 reducing the occurrence of mold is critical to  
18 protecting residents' health.

19           The next slide shows pictures of one of  
20 the investments we made to help bring down the number  
21 of mold complaints by reducing moisture in our  
22 buildings. Our investment in new state-of-the-art  
23 roof fans and comprehensive cleaning of the lateral  
24 ductwork for our bathroom ventilation systems using a  
25 HEPA vacuum, which eliminates the dust and debris

2 that it collected over many decades. This program  
3 impacted more than 8,000 individual roof fans and  
4 more than 74,000 apartments with mechanical  
5 ventilation. When this work is performed, we then  
6 measure airflow in each bathroom to ensure the system  
7 is now working properly.

8           Slide 13, the next slide, is a snapshot  
9 of our progress year over year addressing and  
10 reducing the number of elevator no-service  
11 conditions. A no-service condition is defined to  
12 include situations where a single elevator building  
13 or stair hall has no service or all elevators in a  
14 bank are out of service. As you can see, these  
15 snapshots take data each calendar year up to October  
16 21st and compare it year over year. In 2022, NYCHA  
17 had 13,286 no-service conditions at this point in the  
18 year with an average duration of 4.67 hours. In 2023,  
19 NYCHA had lowered that to 11,431 no-service  
20 conditions with an average duration that ticked up to  
21 4.98 hours. But to date, 2024 has been our best  
22 performance yet. We've had 9,096 no-service  
23 conditions with an average duration of 4.59 hours.  
24 Though we do not exactly meet the agreement's  
25 requirements here, we are seeing steady progress

2 reducing the occurrence of no-service conditions at  
3 NYCHA properties.

4           As you can see on the next slide on slide  
5 14, we also have been replacing elevators to meet the  
6 agreement's requirements that 425 elevators be  
7 addressed through the capital and PAC programs. To  
8 date, we've replaced 141 elevators through our  
9 capital program, which is off the pace we need to hit  
10 the agreement milestone. However, we should be able  
11 to catch up in our forecasting that we will exceed  
12 the 275 target by replacing a total of 287 elevators  
13 through next year. In the PACT program, we have  
14 exceeded the obligation already to convert 150  
15 elevators.

16           Slide 15, the next slide, shows you some  
17 pictures of some of these elevator replacements at  
18 both PACT sites and NYCHA-managed sites in Manhattan,  
19 the Bronx, and Staten Island. When we deliver new  
20 elevators, we're also replacing the outdated  
21 equipment in the motor room and installing remote  
22 monitoring, helping ensure we will be able to improve  
23 our management of these elevators in the future.

24           Slide 16, the next slide, is a snapshot  
25 of one of the reports we have built to report on our

2 progress meeting the pest-related obligations in the  
3 agreement. Here, we are obligated to respond to  
4 complaints from residents related to public health  
5 pest types, including rats, cockroaches, mice, and  
6 bedbugs on very prescribed timelines. As you can see,  
7 we really struggled with the time-based requirements  
8 in 2022 and portions of 2023, but have seen dramatic  
9 improvement in the last 18 months. We now respond on  
10 average to rat complaints within 2.3 days, and for  
11 other pest types within 7.5 days. Because we have  
12 improved our use of integrated pest management  
13 techniques, we've also seen a reduction in the number  
14 of complaints from residents. The number of rat  
15 complaints in calendar year 2022 was 2,596; in 2023,  
16 it was 2,130; and so far this year, it is 1,137. The  
17 number of other pest type complaints in calendar year  
18 2022 was more than 33,000; in 2023, it was reduced to  
19 30,765; and so far this year, it is 21,107.

20 Slide 17 shows pictures of some of the  
21 investments we are also making in our waste  
22 infrastructure. Our interior compactors and interior  
23 compactor rooms and basements. At NYCHA, these rooms  
24 have often been a place where pests harbor because of  
25 leaks and the presence of a food source. These rooms

2 are now being rehabilitated to prevent infestations  
3 from starting in our residential building spaces  
4 where waste is managed.

5           As you can see on the next slide, we have  
6 a lot more work to do, and we know we need to keep  
7 making progress to improve physical conditions for  
8 residents. We need to continue to remove lead-based  
9 paint across the portfolio, deliver elevator and  
10 boiler projects, and we must deliver the other  
11 projects funded through the City Capital Action Plan.  
12 It is also critical that we push forward our work to  
13 reform the repair process at NYCHA so residents get  
14 the repairs they deserve, and we must continue to  
15 work with the federal monitor to ensure we comply  
16 with the provisions of the agreement that so far have  
17 been difficult to tackle.

18           NYCHA has been serving as the most  
19 critical source of affordable housing, a platform for  
20 opportunity for countless New Yorkers over its nearly  
21 century-long history. The HUD agreement was a crucial  
22 moment in its long history, and we believe it will be  
23 a turning point for NYCHA's residents. Strengthening  
24 this vital institution so that it can serve the  
25 generations to come is at the heart of our mission.

2 We have made progress with our transformation  
3 efforts, but there is still more work to do. NYCHA  
4 will continue moving forward, guided by the HUD  
5 agreement and together with the monitor's team and  
6 our federal partners, driven by our shared commitment  
7 to improve the quality of life for NYCHA families. I  
8 thank you all for the opportunity to talk about this  
9 work, and thank you to our partners, including the  
10 Monitor team, HUD, the U.S. Attorney's Office, and  
11 members of the Council for your support. We're happy  
12 to answer any questions you may have.

13 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you, Brad. Now,  
14 I'm going to actually yield the floor to Council  
15 Member Brewer to start with the questions before I  
16 start mine.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you very  
18 much, and I do have a lot of respect for NYCHA as I  
19 hope you know.

20 I'm going to just follow, because this is  
21 about the monitor, some of the same questions. With  
22 the trash, the monitor said they're looking at it.  
23 You mentioned it, but it's still a big problem, and  
24 some of it is chutes, some of it is no space to put  
25 the trash, etc. I would just like you, because we are



2 talking about pests and those other things, so where  
3 are we and where do you think we're going? Then the  
4 second, with these vacant apartments. These vacant  
5 apartments are really a challenge. They're not only  
6 the mold and the other issues, but all the drug  
7 dealers are in there. They're homeless in there. I  
8 mean, you need some Social Security numbers to see if  
9 that person is really supposed to be living in there,  
10 etc. so the whole, if we're going to stick with  
11 vacant and pests, then that's one thing, but just so  
12 you know, I've got a whole bunch of illegal people  
13 living there in the vacant apartments. And then just  
14 the issue of, again, this is a stretch for today, but  
15 when families come in from the shelters, which I  
16 think is really important, they need services because  
17 they're not getting them so I was just wondering if  
18 we could just focus on those three issues.

19 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: Yeah,  
20 and I'll have Eva Trimble, our Chief Operating  
21 Officer, take them.

22 On waste management, that is a focus area  
23 in the agreement. We're obligated to inspect our  
24 properties daily in the agreement and also

2 containerize and store our trash in containers every  
3 day.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Easier said than  
5 done.

6 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: It's  
7 very much easier said than done. We're making a lot  
8 of investments in our waste infrastructure to  
9 accomplish that. We've actually made it very far on  
10 making sure we can do that. But Eva, if you want to  
11 talk about waste and vacancy.

12 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Thank  
13 you. Sure, and definitely would like to have any  
14 specific examples from you. You can forward them to  
15 Brian so we can follow up. But 97 percent of our  
16 sites are containerized and we have already launched  
17 a team, we call the Scorecard Team, that does  
18 inspections at the property in order to see how those  
19 waste facilities are working. We would definitely  
20 welcome any problems that you're seeing so we can  
21 make sure we send our Scorecard there to follow up  
22 and advise.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: But then what  
24 happens after the Scorecard? Say you get a, I don't  
25 know, a D, I don't know what you get.

2 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: What  
3 they do is they work with the property management  
4 team to fix any deficiencies they're seeing. If  
5 there's a compactor down, if there's something wrong  
6 in the waste yard, they will work with property  
7 management team, the waste management department in  
8 coordination in order to fix those problems to make  
9 sure that the trash stays containerized and stays off  
10 the street.

11 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: We  
12 did early on in the agreement create a waste  
13 management department that, like Eva said, does all  
14 of our compactor repairs that we can do in-house.  
15 They also bought for the first time, NYCHA has its  
16 own trucks so we can go do pickups even without  
17 Sanitation which we do at some of the curbside  
18 locations so if we can't containerize it, at least we  
19 can go pick it up and take it off the site which has  
20 led to a lot of cleanliness improvements especially  
21 in some sites in Brooklyn. It's been an early thing  
22 that we did in the agreement to create that  
23 department which has been really successful.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: People, not just  
25 at NYCHA, everybody puts the garbage next to the

2 chute, next to the container, just FYI. They do it in  
3 the street. You have a nice solar panel and next to  
4 it, garbage. I'm just saying it's a hard, it's a lot  
5 of education that goes with it so you can have a  
6 nice, nice brand new container and rats.

7 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: Yeah.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. So, I'm just  
9 saying they still need a lot of work on trash.

10 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: To  
11 respond to your vacant unit question, which I know is  
12 a topic we've discussed at length.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: We have.

14 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: So, I'm  
15 happy to report that this year in 2024, through  
16 September 2024, we've had a 57 percent increase  
17 compared to the same time last year of our number of  
18 move-ins. We've moved in 2,968. We are turning over  
19 at a clip of approximately 430 units a month, and so  
20 this has been a drastic improvement since our  
21 previous conversations.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay.

23 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: I know  
24 you mentioned a site probably in northern Manhattan  
25 that has significant number of vacancies. I'd like to

2 remind you that we are preparing the St. Nicholas  
3 development for a comprehensive modernization and, as  
4 part of that project, we are holding vacancies in the  
5 neighborhood and nearby developments in order to  
6 facilitate relocations for families and keep them in  
7 their neighborhoods so, if you want to send me that  
8 example, I'll confirm that, but I suspect that  
9 significant number of vacancies is due to the  
10 impending relocation of St. Nick's residents as part  
11 of the comprehensive modernization program.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. I have a  
13 different one, but I'll give it to you offline.

14 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Okay.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: When you say 50  
16 percent decrease, that's huge. 2,900 move-in, that's  
17 fabulous. How many do you still think are vacant? Do  
18 you have some number? It's hard to know.

19 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Right  
20 now, we have approximately 5,500 vacant units  
21 available. Remember, 60 percent of our move-ins right  
22 now are transfers so every time we move someone,  
23 another vacant opens so it's very hard to see a  
24 significant decrease in that number, but we have  
25 significantly increased our production on turnovers

2 over the past year or so, and we're very proud of  
3 that. I do also want to address your point about the  
4 squatters or illegal occupants.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I've got a long  
6 list right here.

7 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: And  
8 we're happy to take that list from you. Actually,  
9 we've had a great partnership with NYPD, Lieutenant  
10 Barron, and we've done over 150 activities this year,  
11 I don't know what the right word is, but where we've  
12 actually been working with NYPD to secure apartments,  
13 bring them back into NYCHA, make sure they're locked  
14 up, and remove those illegal occupants. We're happy  
15 to take that list, check it through our system, and  
16 then work with NYPD to address this situation.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. And then  
18 just finally, give enough support to homeless  
19 families when they move in. Again, that's sort of  
20 beyond the monitor, but it is yours, and problems  
21 ensue, without being specific, when they don't have  
22 services. Is that something that you're working on?

23 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Our  
24 Family Partnerships Department is tasked with  
25 providing the tips and referrals.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I know they're  
3 tasked.

4 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: The  
5 family has to want the help and want the service. Our  
6 Property Management Team will call in Family  
7 Partnerships if they think a family needs help, but  
8 obviously the family has to want that.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. The only  
10 suggestion might be to be in touch, and you have to  
11 do it in a sensitive fashion, I understand, with the  
12 tenant leadership because they know when something's  
13 out of control. Again, you have to be careful, I  
14 understand, but it's something to think about,  
15 because it's really making people upset in these  
16 buildings so you don't want to upset the residents,  
17 and also these folks need support. Again, not  
18 everybody does, but those who do, I'm making a  
19 suggestion for that, because it's going to lead to  
20 some of these other issues that you're trying to  
21 address. I could go on and on, but I'll stop.

22 But I want to back you up on your RAD-  
23 PACT, oh my God, I go to so many RAD-PACT meetings,  
24 and it's not perfect. It's a whole bunch of issues

2 with the RAD-PACT. Monitor can't do it. That's you,  
3 but I just want to back you up, Chair.

4 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Three hours at a  
6 RAD-PACT the other day, three hours.

7 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: I could imagine.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: (INAUDIBLE)  
9 problems.

10 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: I have some questions  
11 that were presented by Council Member Mealy. This  
12 particularly deals with the Tapscott Street Rehab,  
13 and I know that's a RAD-PACT converted development  
14 that's actually going through their phase of  
15 construction. Council Member wanted to know, does the  
16 developer or the Fairstead require residents to  
17 deconstruct their furniture or cut them in half  
18 during renovations?

19 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: No. I  
20 will say the Compliance Department, we do have an  
21 oversight role with the PACT program, and we work  
22 with the developers every day to resolve issues so,  
23 if there's a specific resident that she wants to  
24 refer our way, we can definitely work with them.



2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Some tenants have  
3 reached out to her office, and they've been saying  
4 that their apartment during renovations have dealt  
5 with dust and other environmental hazards. What is  
6 the practice when NYCHA moves residents to hotels?

7 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: So,  
8 this is within the public housing portfolio or the  
9 PACT portfolio?

10 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: RAD-PACT.

11 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: The  
12 PACT portfolio, I can tell you about what we do to  
13 oversee the lead abatement program, which obviously I  
14 think is the dust hazard folks are most worried  
15 about, so we have, very early on, we created a  
16 monitoring protocol for our PACT properties that  
17 looks the exact same as our public housing portfolio  
18 on the lead abatement side. So, we have a third-party  
19 environmental monitoring firm that we use who goes  
20 out and does regular inspections. They do inspections  
21 of every element of the lead process so they look at  
22 the abatement work, they look at the clearance work  
23 and the dust wipes being taken, and they make sure  
24 folks are using the right containment, taking dust  
25 wipes properly to clear the unit, doing a proper

2 visual inspection of any dust hazards. I will say,  
3 you know, there's variability, but most of the time  
4 they're finding pretty good results, and then we also  
5 do a remote monitoring as well using documentation.  
6 So, obviously when you do lead abatement at a PACT  
7 site, just like at a public housing unit, you have to  
8 produce federally required documents, including a  
9 clearance report to show that you've cleared the unit  
10 of any dust hazards remaining after the abatement's  
11 complete, and we review a sample of those reports to  
12 make sure that they comply with federal law, have the  
13 proper number of dust wipes taken, and the  
14 methodologies laid out, and that the lab results are  
15 what they should be, and we report on all this  
16 publicly so, if anybody wants to go to our website,  
17 you can see in both programs how we're doing on that.

18 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. Well, maybe  
19 there's specific instances where there's a lack of  
20 oversight on behalf of NYCHA.

21 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: If  
22 any particular resident has an issue that they're  
23 worried about in terms of lead dust or anything else,  
24 we take complaints through our portal in compliance,  
25

2 but also through my email or other folks' email so,  
3 whatever you've got, we're happy to look into it.

4 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. I guess the  
5 Council Member is on virtually. She'll hopefully tend  
6 to those specific situations to you so we can get  
7 some resolve on that.

8 Now, dealing with NYCHA, what work has  
9 been done to account for the budget difficulties in  
10 regard to complying with the HUD agreement, and how  
11 are you prioritizing the work necessary for  
12 compliance moving forward?

13 That's a great question, Council Member.  
14 I mean, some of the work is funded already, so  
15 obviously all of the capital work, the elevators and  
16 boiler replacements is funded with State and City and  
17 Federal money. The lead abatement work is mostly  
18 City, but some federal grants we've won too over the  
19 last few years are competitive grants so that work is  
20 funded in our budget. I'll say that I think Eva will  
21 say this too, but our hardest thing to budget for is  
22 just day-to-day repairs in people's units and skilled  
23 trades and making sure that we can keep up with the  
24 physical demands of our infrastructure deteriorating  
25 over time, so things like plumbing and painting and

2 plastering and all the work that has to get done in  
3 people's apartments, which obviously does impact some  
4 of our agreement metrics, and that's where we, I  
5 think, face both a substantial capital need and an  
6 operational budget need.

7 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Specifically, I know  
8 there was a situation in my District with the Louis  
9 H. Pink houses where I believe there are new boilers  
10 that are being put in to help out the existing  
11 boilers, but there's been a pause because of a  
12 situation with DOT, and it seems like it has dragged  
13 on. I know there's been some back and forth with my  
14 office over that particular issue, but when there's a  
15 pause like that, does that also bring about a budget  
16 difficulty or because of timing, does it add on  
17 costs?

18 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: We can have our  
19 capital folks address that one. I think sometimes  
20 there will be increases in costs when there's a  
21 pause. That one sounds more like maybe we're having  
22 trouble staging the mobiles on the DOT property,  
23 which shouldn't really have a huge impact on the  
24 project or the project's budget, and we try to build  
25 in contingencies in our budgets for all of our

2 capital projects so that if something like that does  
3 happen, we can still fund the project, and obviously  
4 these boiler projects need to get done.

5 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. Hopefully we'll  
6 get some more feedback on that.

7 In the final report, the outgoing monitor  
8 outlined the need to improve three-pillar areas,  
9 governance, ethics with value-based compliance, and  
10 accountability. What work has been done thus far to  
11 improve these areas, and what plans do you have to  
12 foster a culture of responsibility for NYCHA?

13 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG:  
14 That's a great question. I think that was a very  
15 insightful report from the last monitor team. I think  
16 we've built a lot in the last few years to try to  
17 make sure our staff understand the responsibility of  
18 being a NYCHA employee and what it means to be a  
19 NYCHA employee and having good values around customer  
20 service, but obviously there's a lot more work to do  
21 in that area. In these focus areas, we have very  
22 specific ways now of identifying staff who are not  
23 following the proper protocols, which are using risk-  
24 based data analytical tools and an investigation team  
25 and making sure we identify folks. I think we do have

2 senior leadership buy-in to hold people accountable  
3 who are not doing things properly, but it is a daily  
4 task to make sure we rebuild the culture to meet that  
5 moment.

6 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Is there anything  
7 you're doing to position NYCHA's response more  
8 towards a proactive pre-exemption or remediation?

9 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: For  
10 staff accountability?

11 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Yes.

12 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: I  
13 think we are trying to be more proactive. I'll say  
14 we've got a really good effort underway to rebuild  
15 our trainings around management skills and customer  
16 service and softer skills too and also providing more  
17 up-to-date training on just how to adhere to the  
18 updated procedures we've built over the last few  
19 years. Once our staff is really trained on that and  
20 understand what it means to be a NYCHA employee and  
21 how you present yourself and how to manage staff, I  
22 think we'll be much better off. That is the most  
23 proactive thing you can do is to make sure our  
24 managers and our employees know the expectations of  
25 them through really good training.

2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Residents continue to  
3 have issues with long wait times for work orders that  
4 are improperly closed, particularly, obviously,  
5 tickets being improperly closed. What work is being  
6 done to improve NYCHA accountability and its  
7 responsiveness to those issues?

8 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Thank  
9 you, Council Member. We recognize that the long wait  
10 times and closed work tickets is a consistent  
11 problem. However, I think over the last year,  
12 especially, we've made significant progress here  
13 through our work order reform efforts. One of the  
14 things we're tracking is how many work orders get  
15 closed with work done, so that the ticket actually  
16 represents work performed and not just a closed work  
17 ticket. Over the past year, 70 percent of our tickets  
18 were closed with work done, which was a significant  
19 improvement from the prior years and less than 4  
20 percent of tickets are closed due to no access. We're  
21 really trying to focus on how we're performing on our  
22 work tickets. In addition, we know that our wait  
23 times are long for our skilled trades. It's something  
24 we're constantly tracking and looking at. Right now,  
25 though, our goal was to keep up on what we call

2 annual demand, so keeping up on the work tickets that  
3 are opened each year and each month and, so far,  
4 we're meeting 99 percent of annual demand over the  
5 past year. We're able to keep up right now, but we  
6 understand that there's still a backlog and that  
7 residents are waiting a long time, reflective of the  
8 number of skilled trades we have and our ability to  
9 meet those tickets.

10 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Do you have an  
11 accurate number of what the backlog looks like?

12 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Right  
13 now, our backlog of skilled trade tickets is  
14 approximately 330,000. We work to schedule those  
15 tickets.

16 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: That's throughout  
17 NYCHA?

18 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: That's  
19 throughout NYCHA, yeah, and that's skilled trade  
20 backlog. So, the backlog..

21 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So, the skilled trade  
22 backlog would be?

23 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Our main  
24 trades are carpenter, plumber, bricklayer, plasterer,



2 and that's really the core of our work orders and the  
3 repairs that are needed in the apartments.

4 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And you're saying that  
5 the 300, the number you just gave, is an accurate  
6 number?

7 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Yes.

8 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay.

9 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: That's  
10 for our main skilled trades, the main number. We do  
11 have a small maintenance backlog.

12 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Does that include  
13 scenarios where residents have taken off from work  
14 and the ticket was closed out? How is that accounted  
15 for?

16 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: The  
17 number I gave is the number of open work orders.  
18 Right now, work orders are scheduled through our  
19 Neighborhood Planning Units, which is one of our  
20 major transformation plan projects to create a  
21 Neighborhood Planning Unit so residents can work with  
22 a neighborhood planner to schedule their work orders.  
23 We understand that sometimes work orders get closed  
24 out, but 75 percent of our work orders right now are

2 having work done. We're starting to decrease that  
3 number.

4 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Specifically, the work  
5 orders that are being closed out and no work is being  
6 done, what are the numbers on those? How are you  
7 tracking? How are you trying to improve those so  
8 residents are not taking off from work and losing a  
9 valued day of pay at their expense, not NYCHA's  
10 expense?

11 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: I  
12 will say in most of these agreement related areas, we  
13 have restrictions on staff's ability to do that. You  
14 cannot do that for a mold-related work order, for  
15 example. You cannot close it with a tenant not home.  
16 It's not permitted in the system. Likewise, for  
17 extermination tickets, it requires multiple attempts.  
18 Same goes for our lead-based payment mediation  
19 tickets. You can't close that with a tenant not home.  
20 We also have put things in place to prevent you from  
21 being able to do that with high priority and critical  
22 repairs under the agreement.

23 In terms of other items that are being  
24 done by our skilled trades and our other staff, we do  
25 have oversight now. We have teams that go out and

2 check. I have a skilled trades monitoring program  
3 where we go out and see if our skilled trades are  
4 where they're supposed to be, whether or not they're  
5 at the appointment that's been scheduled for them,  
6 whether or not the right person has showed up. We  
7 also have a Quality Assurance Unit that is taking a  
8 sample of work orders that have been closed and  
9 seeing when they go back to that unit if the work was  
10 done, it was done properly, the tenant is satisfied.  
11 We've tried to build some, on the backend, ways of us  
12 tracking our staff and seeing if we see trends among  
13 particular people who have very high rates, for  
14 example, of closing things without work done. A lot  
15 of us have built tools that look at particular  
16 laborers to see if we see higher rates of that, and  
17 then we'll do an investigation of that person. We do  
18 have a lot of things we've developed in the last few  
19 years to try to get at that problem, which I think  
20 all of us hear from residents a lot of frustration.

21 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Critical repairs are  
22 relative. If you've been waiting for a paint job for  
23 15 years...

24 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: 100  
25 percent.

2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: These types of repair  
3 issues or badly needed repair issues, how are you  
4 addressing those? How are you dealing with those? How  
5 are you tracking those so these things are not  
6 prolonged?

7 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: As I  
8 said, we are tracking all of our work orders and our  
9 performance for those by trade, by the time, and like  
10 I said, right now we're keeping up on annual demand.  
11 We know that there's many tickets that we're not  
12 getting to, and we understand that sometimes we fail  
13 to show up. We have emergencies that happen. Teams  
14 get pulled off. One of the things we're starting to  
15 work on are additional communication protocols to let  
16 residents know when we're not going to show up on  
17 time so robocalls, text messages, we're looking at  
18 other ideas and ways to...

19 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Are you looking at  
20 them or, because robocalls, those types of  
21 communication should be easy to implement. Knowing  
22 the track record of NYCHA, these are things that  
23 should have been implemented already instead of  
24 studying them or thinking about doing them now.

2 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: We are  
3 continuing to work on that because it's real-time  
4 data, and we're working on almost 200,000 work orders  
5 a month, and so we want to make sure that we're able  
6 to...

7 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Well, it's real-time  
8 data when a tenant has had a leak or hasn't had a  
9 paint job for the last 10 or 15 years. That's real-  
10 time data too.

11 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE:  
12 Understood.

13 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Throughout their  
14 report, both monitors have cited that NYCHA does not  
15 track certain data. With the most recent reporting  
16 citing NYCHA's performance in addressing heating  
17 failures in individual apartments as an example, how  
18 does NYCHA make the decision on what data to track  
19 and not track, and what are the resources involved in  
20 the data tracking?

21 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: Just  
22 to be clear, we do track unit complaints. If a  
23 resident calls in a unit heat complaint, it comes in  
24 with a very particular kind of coding with a report  
25 time, and then we can track the time to close. We

2 also implemented protocols in the last five years so  
3 that every time we close a unit complaint, our  
4 heating plant technician has to input the temperature  
5 and take a temperature reading and attach a picture  
6 of their temperature reading, and my Department and  
7 our Heating Department both look at all of our HPTs  
8 to see if they're doing that properly or not. They  
9 don't always, and sometimes we have to engage in  
10 discipline around that process, but we do track heat  
11 complaints.

12           The issue in the agreement has been that  
13 there are very specific there's a random sample that  
14 has to be created for figuring out if you're dipping  
15 below the temperature threshold, and the last monitor  
16 in NYCHA, we did not focus on building that random  
17 sample data set, and we also do still have to figure  
18 out exactly how we want to read some of the  
19 provisions that have different words used in  
20 different places in the agreement that was, in the  
21 way it was written, so in some portions of the  
22 agreement it uses the word outage, in some places it  
23 uses the word shortfall, and so we kind of have never  
24 been able to define out where something is applicable  
25 to apartments versus buildings, lines, and campuses,

2 but we're looking forward to working with the monitor  
3 team to make everyone comfortable with the data and  
4 happy with it.

5 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: How are you dealing  
6 with the senior developments? You know, the senior  
7 developments tend to get a lot of complaints about  
8 the lack of heating or because we know seniors tend  
9 to need more heat. How are those complaints  
10 monitored? How are they tracked? What type of care is  
11 given to those particular developments?

12 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: So,  
13 we have a 24/7 heat desk, which was a requirement in  
14 the agreement. That 24/7 heat desk has, I encourage  
15 people to go check it out, it's got really good data  
16 across the entire Authority now about what complaints  
17 have come in. It also can identify for you how many  
18 seniors live at the property, whether it's a senior  
19 designated building, and when they dispatch staff as  
20 part of the heat process, including floating staff  
21 late at night, they can take that into account if  
22 it's a senior building or not.

23 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Does NYCHA have the  
24 funds and resources to meet the proposed deadlines in  
25 the NYCHA HUD agreement?

2 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: I  
3 think we do in key places. Like I said, the lead  
4 abatement obligation is funded.

5 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Is the money there?

6 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: I  
7 think it's going to be, here's what I'll say is the  
8 hardest thing for us is that we have deteriorating  
9 physical conditions and an enormous capital need,  
10 which the monitor alluded to as well. There are  
11 certain provisions in the agreement that will be  
12 incredibly difficult to comply with if we don't  
13 address the very severe capital needs, including  
14 things like our plumbing system so, if we don't  
15 address our plumbing systems, which is a probably 15-  
16 billion-dollar need, it's really difficult to address  
17 mold and leak compliance. We've seen this in our PACT  
18 portfolio, where once they do address that capital  
19 need, they can keep up with the demand on mold and  
20 leaks. It's hard for us to keep up with that demand  
21 as you mix and match materials in our plumbing  
22 systems, and then you are springing a leak somewhere  
23 else in the plumbing. I think it's going to be  
24 difficult in some places if we don't address the  
25 capital need to get into compliance.



2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Well, among the pillar  
3 areas which requires greatest amount of additional  
4 funding to meet the requirements of the HUD  
5 agreement, which pillar areas are best funded against  
6 the need?

7 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: Our  
8 lead abatement pipeline is probably best funded. That  
9 has 770-plus million dollars attached to it just in  
10 the first 10 years from the City plus a couple grants  
11 we've gotten from HUD that are a few million as well,  
12 and then we've got outyear money to do the abatement  
13 too and the testing so that's probably our best  
14 funded focus area. The boilers and elevators have  
15 gotten a lot of State money and City money and  
16 Federal money. I'd say those are probably the next  
17 most funded.

18 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Well, NYCHA reported  
19 339 million in unfunded capital needs in 2024 and  
20 included 94 million for the pillar area compliance.  
21 What's NYCHA's plan for addressing the 94 million in  
22 pillar needs that were not funded by the Authority in  
23 2024?

24

25

2 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: I  
3 think those are probably operating dollars, right,  
4 not capital dollars?

5 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: These are capital  
6 needs.

7 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: Unmet  
8 capital needs?

9 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Yes.

10 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: 94  
11 million dollars? I guess we'll go back and take a  
12 look at those. I'm not sure how they ended up getting  
13 funded.

14 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. Does NYCHA  
15 anticipate a budget deficit for the forthcoming 2025  
16 budget?

17 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: As you  
18 probably know, our Fiscal Year is a calendar year, so  
19 we're in our budget process right now so I'd have to  
20 defer that as we're finalizing our budget to our CFO  
21 and our CEO. Our budget will be going to our Board in  
22 the next few months for approval, and then we're  
23 happy to sit down and discuss with you what our final  
24 budget position is for next year.

2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. What support do  
3 you think NYCHA needs from the City, State, and  
4 Federal government to accomplish the goals set forth  
5 in the agreement?

6 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: I  
7 think Neil put it probably best. I mean, mostly  
8 resources. I think we've got a lot of good things  
9 that we've done in terms of putting processes in  
10 place, and we're making good investments. Obviously,  
11 the more we scale those investments, the better off  
12 we'll be.

13 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Is NYCHA planning to  
14 request any waivers from HUD to comply with certain  
15 inspections or regulatory requirements to comply with  
16 the NYCHA/HUD agreement?

17 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: Matt  
18 said it, we really do talk every day with HUD and the  
19 attorney's office and the monitor. He gave a good  
20 example of places where we feel like we have good  
21 approaches that maybe we need sign-off from HUD on  
22 that could save a little bit of money and also make  
23 us operate more efficiently. There have been other  
24 things we've worked on around our operating subsidy,  
25 other things we've asked HUD for. We have a regular

2 weekly meeting with very senior leadership at HUD to  
3 go over these items, and it's been a very  
4 collaborative process.

5 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: All right. The monitor  
6 pointed the need for a supplemental action plan for  
7 temperature monitoring devices in all developments.  
8 When should that plan be completed?

9 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: The  
10 temperature monitoring, we've tested a bunch of  
11 products. We can have Keith come up here and talk  
12 about it. Obviously, if you've been in NYCHA  
13 properties, it's not so easy to design a temperature  
14 monitoring device that's going to work on the cloud  
15 across all units and all of our properties and also  
16 give you a reliable temperature so it's a really  
17 difficult problem for us. We have provided a lot of  
18 temperature monitoring through our building  
19 management systems, but having just a specific device  
20 is challenging.

21 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: When do you plan to  
22 complete it?

23 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG:  
24 Keith, you want to talk about the challenges?

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Just briefly, could  
3 you raise your right hand?

4 Do you affirm to tell the truth, the  
5 whole truth, and nothing but the truth in your  
6 testimony before this Committee and to respond  
7 honestly to Council Member questions?

8 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT GROSSMAN: I do.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

10 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT GROSSMAN: To  
11 Brad's point, we've been looking at a number of  
12 different models. We haven't found one that actually  
13 gives us solid return on data. There's wildly  
14 inconsistent with our industry standard temperature  
15 sensor to the remote sensor. The answer to that  
16 question is that we are continuing to work on the  
17 monitor with that and do not have a final date for  
18 completion of that.

19 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Look forward to that.  
20 What is NYCHA's process to addressing the heating  
21 failures in individual apartments from start to  
22 finish?

23 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT GROSSMAN:  
24 There's another thing that we're really looking  
25 forward to working on the monitor with. As part of

2 the agreement, we're required to work on an action  
3 plan with them. This is an area that, again, to  
4 Brad's point, we didn't focus on that in the previous  
5 monitor. This monitor has been working diligently on  
6 a process to both utilize our existing data, which I  
7 think our quality has gotten a lot better over the  
8 last couple of years, and then how to report on that  
9 data publicly to show where we are and are not  
10 missing the agreement.

11 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: I  
12 will say, just to answer your question about the  
13 process, we've worked with the Heating Department in  
14 compliance to build a very comprehensive procedure  
15 for our staff on what to do when there's a unit  
16 complaint. It starts in the boiler room and in the  
17 tank room, but the expectation is that also our staff  
18 is going to go to every unit that has a complaint,  
19 especially if it's during the work day. They have a  
20 thermometer that's issued to them by the NYCHA  
21 Heating Department that meets standards, and they're  
22 supposed to take a temperature check, see if it's  
23 above the legal limit or not, check the radiators and  
24 see if they're working properly, and there's a  
25 specific type of work order we've created for unit

2 complaints that they have to input information on  
3 what they found and take a picture of their  
4 thermometer that shows the temperature, and then we  
5 and the Heating Department check those work orders to  
6 see if our staff are doing it properly or not. If  
7 they're not doing it properly, let's say we see a  
8 picture that has one temperature and inputted  
9 information that work order is a different  
10 temperature, or we see them constantly using the same  
11 temperature, we investigate that person, and so does  
12 the Heating Department, and we engage in a  
13 disciplinary process if we see it repeatedly, and we  
14 really want our staff to follow this very specific  
15 process for every unit complaint.

16 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you. How many  
17 remote monitoring systems have been installed?

18 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: Are  
19 you asking about elevators or heat?

20 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: For elevators.

21 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: For  
22 elevators. The agreement requirement is to do 70  
23 percent of our elevators having remote monitoring.  
24 We're at 73 percent, and Keith can talk to you about  
25 how those systems operate. Every time we're

2 modernizing a new elevator, we are installing a  
3 remote monitoring system, but we have met that  
4 requirement.

5 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: According to the  
6 agreement, one of the obligations related to pest and  
7 waste management is the constructing of 50 rat slabs  
8 by December 2020. Could you share the progress of  
9 this obligation and how many rat slabs have been  
10 constructed to today?

11 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: I  
12 think Dylan will come up here from our capital  
13 program. While he's coming up here, I'll tell you  
14 that rat slabs are not such a simple project as they  
15 sound. Sometimes they're in confined spaces. We also  
16 couldn't do that work during the COVID pandemic, but,  
17 Dylan, if you want to give an update on how many  
18 we've got towards the 50s?

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Before you start,  
20 could you raise your right hand?

21 Do you affirm to tell the truth, the  
22 whole truth, and nothing but the truth in your  
23 testimony before this Committee and to respond  
24 honestly to Council Member questions?

25 DEPUTY BAKER-RICE: Yes, I do.



2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

3 DEPUTY BAKER-RICE: Council Member, to  
4 date, we've completed 37 out of the 50 rat slabs.

5 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Does NYCHA believe  
6 they have met the requirement? Obviously, you haven't  
7 met the requirement of the 50.

8 DEPUTY BAKER-RICE: No. As you said, we  
9 have not.

10 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Does NYCHA believe  
11 that they have met the requirement of the 50 percent  
12 reduction in rat population, 40 percent reduction in  
13 mice, and cockroach reduction in bed bugs?

14 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG:  
15 That's separate from the rat slab. There's an  
16 obligation in the agreement to set a NYCHA Pest  
17 Infestation Index, which I think is what you're  
18 referring to. The last monitor and this monitor are  
19 supposed to be who initiates that Infestation Index.  
20 We have been doing yearly inspections since the  
21 beginning of the agreement to set a baseline, and  
22 then we have to kind of figure out, from a data  
23 standpoint, we've had really talented data scientists  
24 and urban entomologists working on this from the  
25 monitor team for the last five years. I think we are

2 still talking with them about that baseline and what  
3 it will look like, and also what it will look like to  
4 measure the populations in future years, but it is an  
5 exceedingly complicated data project. That's why when  
6 I showed you earlier, we are encouraged and hope that  
7 it will come to show that in the Population Index  
8 too, we're encouraged by the fact that we do see  
9 fewer complaints from residents about the public  
10 health pest types. Complaints are not a perfect way  
11 to see a population because you might have residents  
12 who are not complaining about pests in their  
13 apartment, and that might be the index unit, for  
14 example, but we're encouraged by the downward trend  
15 in the number of complaints being indicative of a  
16 reduction in the population in NYCHA properties.

17 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. Thank you for  
18 that information.

19 We're going to move on to RAD-PACT  
20 developments. How does NYCHA coordinate with private  
21 developers to monitor conditions at apartments as  
22 well as comply with the HUD agreement when specified?

23 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: It's  
24 a great question. Neal and Matt covered it really  
25 well. The PACT program is really a very narrow focus

2 in the agreement itself. The obligations in the  
3 agreement are really about delivering elevators and  
4 boilers through the PACT program. We actually go way  
5 above and beyond the obligations for lead abatement  
6 in the PACT program, but there are some lead  
7 abatement obligations for PACT in the agreement that  
8 we have decided as a policy matter to exceed. We do,  
9 like I said earlier, have a really robust plan to  
10 monitor their lead abatement compliance. We have a  
11 third-party environmental inspector who goes out to  
12 each of the PACT properties. We look at documentation  
13 for each of the PACT properties for a sample of units  
14 on a very specific timeline as part of our  
15 certification process to the federal government. The  
16 monitor has done this, and we have a construction  
17 team that also goes out to look at the assets that  
18 have been delivered and see if they are indeed to  
19 spec. I will say, like, outside of the agreement, we  
20 do a lot with the PACT program that we've built,  
21 especially in the last few years. We have an Asset  
22 Management Team that regularly gets reporting every  
23 month from PACT developers in some of these same  
24 focus areas about how they're addressing work orders,  
25 whether or not they're doing it timely. Our

2 Department does a lot around mold and leaks at those  
3 locations, so if we see any unit that's going beyond  
4 30 days in that report, we have a specific protocol  
5 for compliance to follow up with the resident first,  
6 and then the developer to see if we can expedite  
7 repairs or report on what's happening. We also have a  
8 process for mold and leaks immediately at closing to  
9 kind of manage the transition of those tickets  
10 between NYCHA and the PACT developer and make sure  
11 nothing falls through the cracks about work that has  
12 to get done with the resident. There, too, it's very  
13 resident-focused. We are calling residents and making  
14 sure that we get pictures from them of the repair  
15 getting done.

16 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Tell me about the 30-  
17 day. That's when NYCHA is notified if there's a  
18 prolonged repair that's needed after 30 days?

19 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: We  
20 get a monthly report from the PACT developers that  
21 has lots of data about their work orders, and it's  
22 also available on our website how they're doing. The  
23 30 days is a very specific obligation that we  
24 designed with the BIAS plaintiffs and independent  
25 data analysts so, if we have a ticket that comes in

2 on that monthly report that we see has been open for  
3 30 days or more, it comes to Compliance on a very  
4 specific report, and then we're following up with  
5 that resident to make sure they get the ticket  
6 addressed to their satisfaction.

7 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: What about those RAD-  
8 PACTs that have no ticket process?

9 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: They  
10 all have a work order process.

11 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay.

12 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: Yeah,  
13 so they all have to report to us on all their work  
14 orders in these focus areas, and it's a download that  
15 comes into our environment that we then analyze.

16 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. How are the RAD-  
17 PACT developments impacted when it comes to NYCHA's  
18 compliance with the HUD agreement? For instance, does  
19 NYCHA continue to work with the development after  
20 it's been fully transferred to private ownership?

21 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: Yes.  
22 I mean, we're at least in our Department, we're  
23 working with the PACT residents pretty much the same  
24 way we work with public housing residents so we have  
25 a complaint forum for people to reach out to us. We

2 work actively with them during the construction if  
3 they have an issue, and they're happy to investigate  
4 anything related to the PACT development.

5 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So, if a resident has  
6 a particular repair issue that's been going on for  
7 months, would that have been a failure of NYCHA to  
8 provide oversight or referee that situation?

9 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: It  
10 really, you know, it depends on the circumstances, I  
11 think.

12 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Right.

13 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: I  
14 will say, if we see something, for example, in our  
15 workflow that has exceeded a month or two, we're  
16 pretty aggressive with the developer about getting it  
17 resolved, and we're happy if people want to refer  
18 cases.

19 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: I have multiple cases  
20 I would like to refer to you because I'm intrigued  
21 about NYCHA's oversight and how engaged you really  
22 are in the RAD-PACT developments because I'm not  
23 seeing that on the ground, especially in my District  
24 where we have four RAD-PACT conversions, and we're  
25 constantly seeing emails from tenants complaining

2 about the same repair issues, and some of the repair  
3 issues are being caused by the rehab, so you have a  
4 rehab that's meant to help folks, but it's, you know,  
5 you're seeing leaks, you're seeing terrible paint  
6 jobs being done, inferior materials being used across  
7 the board so it brings me to the question, is this  
8 really a true investment and is NYCHA really meeting  
9 its obligation of really doing the proper oversight  
10 over these RAD-PACTs?

11 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: Yeah,  
12 I do know that I've been to Boulevard Houses and  
13 Linden many times. We have had things that we've had  
14 to go out there for.

15 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Just not Boulevard.  
16 Again, Penn-Wortman.

17 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: Penn-  
18 Wortman and Linden.

19 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Linden Houses.

20 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: Yeah,  
21 and Belmont-Sutter. We've been to a lot of those  
22 locations.

23 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Belmont-Sutter.

24 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: But  
25 happy to come back out.

2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And I would, you know,  
3 I've gotten complaints as being the Chair of Public  
4 Housing Committee throughout the city in some of the  
5 other RAD-PACT conversions so it's obviously  
6 something that I think NYCHA definitely needs to pay  
7 attention to because I'm not seeing the oversight  
8 that's needed over these private, these conversions  
9 that have taken place. It's quite the opposite.

10 Does a development status as a candidate  
11 for RAD-PACT affect NYCHA's process in choosing  
12 developments for improvement and repairs such as lead  
13 remediation and, if so, how?

14 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: It  
15 really has no impact if it's in the pipeline. What  
16 we're going to do, no matter what, we pull a visual  
17 assessment universe every year based on whether it  
18 was a child in the unit and whether the unit's  
19 positive or presumed positive. If you're going to go  
20 PACT, we're still going to create that ticket, and  
21 we're still going to go and see if there's a paint  
22 deficiency and we're still going to remediate it, try  
23 to remediate it on a timely basis. Likewise, we try  
24 to coordinate testing so we're not overwhelming  
25 residents with too many appointments because our PACT



2 developers test and we test, but we are testing and  
3 abating in properties that are on the PACT pipeline  
4 just like we do other pipelines. We do try to not  
5 have us doing it all at the same time so that  
6 residents are not staying home twice for the same  
7 service but, either way, we want residents to get  
8 that service.

9 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. Tenant outreach.  
10 When starting or finishing certain projects such as  
11 NYCHA's centralized robocall system for heating  
12 outages, how do you notify NYCHA tenants?

13 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG:  
14 You're asking if there's an outage, how do we notify  
15 residents?

16 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Yes.

17 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: So,  
18 there's a requirement in the agreement around  
19 notifications happening via robocall, which we do. It  
20 automatically triggers a robocall once an outage has  
21 been confirmed that goes to the residents in the  
22 impacted units so sometimes an outage is a line,  
23 sometimes it's a building, sometimes it's like  
24 certain buildings, so it depends on kind of how we  
25 validate the outage, and then that will generate

2 robocalls automatically that go out from the system  
3 informing them of the outage. Also, once the outage  
4 has been restored, we check apartments before we say  
5 that it's been restored, but we do want to make sure  
6 anybody that had the outage can still put in a ticket  
7 if they still feel like they don't have heat service  
8 even after we've restored the boiler. So, we have an  
9 IVR system that has an outbound call that goes to  
10 residents that has them have the opportunity to  
11 create another work order if they need to say, hey, I  
12 still don't have heat.

13 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And also as far as  
14 communicating to residents or the tenants that are in  
15 the RAD-PACT converted developments, is the Authority  
16 monitoring when those scenarios take place,  
17 particular outage in a building, what's the degree of  
18 oversight or monitoring or engagement of NYCHA when  
19 it comes to the RAD-PACTs?

20 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG:  
21 That's a good question. I'm not sure what the  
22 notification requirements are for outages at a PACT  
23 site. Obviously, they have different data systems. We  
24 can look into that.

2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So you're saying  
3 there's a...

4 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: I  
5 honestly don't know.

6 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: You don't know. Okay.

7 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: I  
8 don't know how they distribute notifications.

9 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: They're not reporting  
10 to you?

11 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: Not  
12 me personally.

13 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: You're not in the mix?  
14 If there's an outage of any sort in a RAD-PACT  
15 development or in a building, they don't report to  
16 you?

17 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: We do  
18 get a report from them that the outage occurred. I  
19 don't know how they notify residents and what their  
20 process is for notifying residents that an outage has  
21 occurred so we can look into that.

22 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: That particular  
23 process, you don't know?

24 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: I  
25 personally don't know.

2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So, who would know?

3 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG:

4 Someone from our Real Estate Department and the Asset  
5 Management Team, which they're not here today, but we  
6 can definitely look into it.

7 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. How do you  
8 verify whether tenants receive the messaging and do  
9 you track the participation and responsiveness of the  
10 outreach efforts with NYCHA?

11 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: We  
12 can check data on the robocall and how many people  
13 picked it up and how many people answered it, but it  
14 is hard to measure sometimes whether people have  
15 heard the alert.

16 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Would you say they're  
17 effective?

18 CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER GREENBURG: I  
19 have a lot of residents that complain to me about how  
20 many robocalls they get so I think so. I think a lot  
21 of us are trying to study other communications  
22 platforms. Some folks use text messaging at NYCHA  
23 which maybe is a better one, but we're always open to  
24 feedback.

2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: All right. Well, thank  
3 you so much for your answers and your testimony.

4 Thank you.

5 We're going to move to the public comment  
6 section.

7 Guys, order. Order in the Chamber. You'll  
8 have your opportunity to give testimony and at that  
9 time we'll do so. Thank you.

10 Okay. I'm now going to open up the  
11 hearing for public testimony.

12 I remind members of the public that this  
13 is a government proceeding and that the decorum shall  
14 be observed at all times. As such, members of the  
15 public shall remain silent at all times.

16 The witness table is reserved for people  
17 who wish to testify. No video recording or  
18 photography is allowed from the witness table.  
19 Further, members of the public may not present audio  
20 or video recordings as testimony but may submit  
21 transcripts of such recordings to the Sergeant-at-  
22 Arms for inclusion into the hearing record.

23 If you wish to speak at today's hearing,  
24 please fill out the appearance card with the  
25 Sergeant-at-Arms and wait to be recognized. When

2 recognized, you will have two minutes to speak at  
3 today's hearing, which is the NYCHA's HUD Agreement  
4 on the Ongoing Federal Monitorship.

5           If you have a written statement or  
6 additional written testimony you wish to submit for  
7 the record please provide a copy of that testimony to  
8 the Sergeant-at-Arms. You may also email written  
9 testimony to testimony@councilnyc.gov or our other  
10 email address within 72 hours of this hearing. Audio  
11 and video recordings will not be accepted.

12           The first panel we're going to begin with  
13 Crystal G, Alixa Cruz, Christina Chaise, Aixa Torres,  
14 and Zulay Velazquez.

15           Thank you. We'll begin with our right.

16           ALIXA CRUZ: Hi, good afternoon.

17           CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Good afternoon.

18           ALIXA CRUZ: I'm Alixa Cruz, and I've been  
19 a resident for many years, maybe 50-something years.  
20 I'm trying to keep Section 9. I wanted to talk about  
21 a bill that Nydia Velázquez had presented before.  
22 It's the HR307, I think it is. It hasn't been  
23 approved, and I think that they should, the Democrats  
24 are not wanting it. They are going against the people  
25 that are low income and they want to get us out of

2 housing and to give us over to the private developers  
3 and I don't feel safe with the security of NYCHA that  
4 I had years ago. I wanted to present the HR307, but  
5 it's not passed because we went to (INAUDIBLE)  
6 building and we protested and on Twitter he approved  
7 it and nothing has been done. None of the delegates,  
8 none of the elected officials or him. They have  
9 decided to go forward with the privatizers regardless  
10 of renovation or demolition and it scares me  
11 because we're not protected with Section 9 the way we  
12 have been since 1930-something and it's very scary.  
13 It's very scary for me because I live on low income.

14 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you for your  
15 testimony and we'll definitely take a look at that  
16 particular bill.

17 ALIXA CRUZ: Yeah.

18 CRYSTAL G: Good afternoon, Mr. Banks. How  
19 are you doing?

20 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Good to see you again.

21 CRYSTAL G: Good to see you too. I have a  
22 lot that I would like to say. I know that this HUD  
23 amendment was what this meeting was about, but I'm  
24 very concerned because I noticed Council Member Ossé,  
25 he asked a question as well about tenant leaders not

2 having access to whatever and not being on the HUD  
3 CAC, the Community Advisory Council, but that's not  
4 true. There are Tenant Association Board Members on  
5 the CAC meetings that's on the Board, number one,  
6 and, number two, someone had asked, Ms. Avilés, she  
7 said DCOP members are on the Community Advisory  
8 Council but the guy you was talking to, he said no,  
9 that there weren't any, but there are. Okay, you have  
10 District Council people on that HUD monitorship. The  
11 thing I couldn't figure out is because Mr. Ossé even  
12 asked how is it that you formed a monitor, I'll wait  
13 'til he finishes telling you what he's telling you so  
14 you can hear what I'm saying, the brother asked how  
15 did they form this HUD monitor. I think that was in  
16 Trump's era with, I forget the guy that's the surgeon  
17 (INAUDIBLE) that's when that Trump monitor thing was  
18 formed. Okay, so who appointed these people, why  
19 wouldn't they have appointed NYCHA Tenant  
20 Associations since it seems like the NYCHA Tenant  
21 Associations got all the juice because if you look at  
22 the bylaws, right, the bylaws governs the  
23 organization so this is democracy so tenants can't  
24 even approach these people. It's as if they're Jesus  
25 Christ or something, and can I continue?



2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: 30 seconds.

3 CRYSTAL G: I'm very, very concerned how  
4 is it, I'm in Washington Houses, and our Tenant  
5 Association from 2019 has never presented minutes at  
6 our tenant meetings, we haven't met with our new  
7 manager, we have never, we don't know what kind of  
8 TPA money is being spent, how is the DCOP, the  
9 District Council of Presidents, who are the people  
10 who approve tenant participation money, how are they  
11 approving these people going to conferences in Puerto  
12 Rico, for their family days, how is DCOP approving  
13 this, how is HUD approving this TPA money, and the  
14 tenants, the residents, are not getting this  
15 information because we don't get minutes. There are  
16 no minutes. The last thing I wanted to say is I don't  
17 understand (INAUDIBLE)

18 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: 30 more seconds.

19 CRYSTAL G: What I wanted to say how do  
20 you people, you have these hearings, how do you  
21 follow up? Like I know y'all are supposed to be  
22 questioning government agencies, City agencies, New  
23 York City Housing Authority, I know it's a  
24 corporation and it's all 338 developments (INAUDIBLE)  
25 but nothing is ever resolved. I thank God that

2 there's a few tenants here today. I came out because  
3 I'm very, very concerned how these tenant  
4 associations are operating. We have a DCOP person at  
5 this table, and I remember her telling me when she  
6 was appointed, she even said I don't even know what  
7 I'm doing, I don't even know what my title is so we  
8 got folks that don't even know, I personally believe  
9 NYCHA is a syndicate, me personally, because and it  
10 needs to be investigated. You can follow me, watch  
11 me, I don't care. I live there, we pay rent, we  
12 paying good rent. How is it that the criminals seem  
13 to be working with the cops and the tenants, we have  
14 no, my compactor in my building has been out for a  
15 year, the compactor. They put it on for a couple of  
16 months and then it's out again. How is that possible?  
17 The word on the street is the workers don't want to  
18 go in the basement because it's rats this long. Well,  
19 when was we going to get the memo as tenants. It's  
20 not fair. We got managers coming and going. I don't  
21 know who our manager is because I speak up for  
22 myself.

23 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Right.

24 CRYSTAL G: You got guys in the management  
25 office that leave out the office with bags this long.

2 They could be taking computers out of the building,  
3 management office, they could be removing computers,  
4 they could be taking our documents and sharing them  
5 with whoever. Thank you for letting me speak, Mr.  
6 Banks. I really appreciate that.

7 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: I hear your  
8 frustrations.

9 CRYSTAL G: And I hope you'll follow up  
10 because my mama always told me if you don't have  
11 nothing good to say about somebody then don't say  
12 squat.

13 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Don't say squat.

14 CRYSTAL G: The last thing, I really need  
15 to say this, when they swear, who are they swearing  
16 to. There's no Bible so what are you swearing to.

17 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Right.

18 CRYSTAL G: Come on, now. We got to do  
19 better than this.

20 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you for your  
21 testimony, ma'am.

22 AIXA TORRES: Okay. Good afternoon. I  
23 bring to the Council, since this is supposed to be  
24 about RAD and PACT also, the federal monitor, that  
25 one of the things, my name is Aixa Torres, and I'm

2 the President of Alfred E. Smith Houses is that the  
3 abatement is being done. However, some of the  
4 residents, I've been pushing back and what's  
5 happening is they say oh, you can opt out. At the  
6 advice of the attorney that we have on retainer at  
7 Alfred E. Smith, he said Aixa, what was the point of  
8 going to court and winning this case if the residents  
9 are not going to abate the lead in their apartments,  
10 right, and so I have spoken to the federal monitor  
11 about this and I owe him the names of the residents  
12 who have opt out because they feel it's too much to  
13 move out of their homes, to do whatever it does. On  
14 RAD-PACT, and I am one angry person today, when they  
15 talk about we're opening, no, there was a resident  
16 who was arrested in a RAD meeting that was supposed  
17 to be in a public school for illegally trespassing  
18 and she was invited by the residents of that  
19 development that are going through this process so  
20 that they can have, right, a different view or part  
21 of what really happens when you go from Section 9 to  
22 RAD and PACT. I think you need to ask about that.  
23 There has to be like real, so now residents can't  
24 speak up because they're going to be handcuffed and  
25 taken out, when they've been invited to a meeting to

2 defend or to advise or advocate for residents who are  
3 requesting support and help because they feel they're  
4 not getting it from NYCHA, and since it happened in  
5 my district, right?

6 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: We are inquiring about  
7 that.

8 AIXA TORRES: Okay, yeah, I didn't want to  
9 mention the resident's name because she happens to be  
10 a resident...

11 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: We're very familiar  
12 with the situation, yeah.

13 AIXA TORRES: But I just didn't and I  
14 don't want to mention if you ask me off, I will tell  
15 you the name of the person and I will tell you the  
16 name of the development but I am and, for the record,  
17 I have family, blood, that lives in that development  
18 who are clueless about how this is being handled with  
19 the RAD and the PACT. Okay, thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you for your  
21 testimony.

22 ZULAY VELAZQUEZ: Zulay Velazquez from  
23 Jacob Riis. So, to add to that day, what's going on  
24 that person, it was at Riis and the person was  
25 arrested, and the reason why we invited her was

2 exactly what Ms. Torres said but, in addition to  
3 that, it's been a very unfair process at Riis because  
4 we're supposed to get a vote and it's supposed to be  
5 transparent and they say they're doing this resident  
6 engagement but they're not. All they're doing is  
7 showing, they're doing like this fake façade. They  
8 don't let you ask questions or they don't let the  
9 people who are vocal ask questions so, for an  
10 example, there was a meeting last week. They was  
11 letting every other resident ask questions and so I  
12 walked in the room and then they wouldn't let me ask  
13 a question, and everyone deserves to hear the answer  
14 because they're not being transparent, but we're  
15 supposed to get a vote and then somehow there's  
16 something wrong with the bylaws, they're switching  
17 the vote over to March but so is the RAD-PACT vote  
18 supposedly but how do we have a developer is essence,  
19 so we found that out last week but how is that  
20 possible if we haven't even voted, number one. Number  
21 two, who made that decision because in the cover  
22 letters, it says that they would include the members  
23 and the residents in every single step, and they have  
24 not done that. All they're doing, they'll pretend and  
25 they'll take pictures and like, in the last two

2 meetings, they have these little dots they give  
3 people. If you like the program, you put green. If  
4 you don't like it, put orange. They were giving the  
5 elderly people and the Asian people only the green  
6 dots so what they're trying to do is they're trying  
7 to give this illusion like, oh, the residents voted  
8 for that, the residents did this, but that's a lie.  
9 We still have questions. The subcommittee doesn't  
10 even meet regularly, and the questions and concerns  
11 that they have are not even being addressed. It's a  
12 problem.

13 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: 30 more seconds.

14 ZULAY VELAZQUEZ: And I want to say that  
15 the park at Riis was put up because of something for  
16 Adams and we still have heat coming up from the  
17 ground that should have been corrected before they  
18 put up that park or the fence should have went down  
19 because if those pipes explode, there's going to be  
20 asbestos all over that playground and that basketball  
21 court and it's getting worse by the day. It's really  
22 scary. If you walk past there, not only does it  
23 smell, but the heat is under the ground so far that  
24 the sidewalk is cracking so I mean, like are we going  
25 to cave in. They're not fixing it and they were

2 supposed to fix it months ago and they haven't. I  
3 could keep going but it's just really upsetting and  
4 the monitor in regards to the water for the arsenic  
5 scare, it was a crisis, and we have well over 40, 50  
6 residents with proof from different facilities.  
7 different hospitals. There's no way that a lab could  
8 say this was a mistake when you have 50, 40 residents  
9 reporting from three or four different hospitals.  
10 It's impossible but, guess what, the monitor is not  
11 even providing water. We're showering in the filthy  
12 water. I have a piece of metal stuck in my navel  
13 because I took a bath and I'm allergic, I have  
14 contact dermatitis. Who's going to take this metal  
15 out? It's an exploratory procedure. What's going to  
16 happen to me? I could die just because I need to take  
17 out a piece of metal. Like this is real serious and  
18 it's the East Coastal Resilience Project because they  
19 say it's for our sewer but it's not. They're building  
20 for the East Coastal Resilience and they're killing  
21 us. That's the bottom line.

22 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: I hear your  
23 frustrations. Thank you for your testimony. Thank you  
24 for your advocacy.



2           The next panel will be Darren Sealey,  
3 Lucy Newman, Caesar Godwall, Christopher Leon  
4 Johnson, and Siide Fiedel.

5           I'm going to start to my left.

6           CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: How long do we  
7 have?

8           CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Two minutes.

9           CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Two minutes.

10          CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Mr. Johnson.

11          CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Good afternoon.

12 My name is Christopher Leon Johnson. Thank you, Chair  
13 Banks, for having this hearing today. I heard a lot  
14 from the federal monitor, two co-federal monitors  
15 about the HUD situation. I understand this was done  
16 during the Trump era and it's real good. We need this  
17 accountability from the government to make sure that  
18 NYCHA is doing their job, but the power really lies  
19 with the tenants, the power really lies with all  
20 these tenants of NYCHA. These tenants of NYCHA have  
21 to come together and unite as one and fight back  
22 against what's happening to them, and this starts  
23 with making sure that you don't align with  
24 organizations that are down with CODA LES, like the  
25 organization that's called Residents to Preserve

2 Public Housing. That's one of the big organizations  
3 that's allegedly so-called fighting for the tenants,  
4 but they're not. Their lead person, Marquise Jenkins,  
5 is a member of CODA LES. CODA LES gets a lot of money  
6 from developers. How is a person that is a district  
7 leader, that is part of a political club that is,  
8 only he's a district leader because of that political  
9 club with the help of Paul Newell, is advocating for  
10 the NYCHA tenants. The people of NYCHA got to get  
11 together, but I tell people this, you guys got to  
12 come together and tell Marquise Jenkins to get out  
13 the way. Marquise Jenkins is down with Carlina  
14 Rivera. Carlina Rivera is a YIMBY politician, a YIMBY  
15 politician act like she's fighting for the people  
16 with this. It's unrealistic so people got to stand  
17 up. You can have all this accountability you want  
18 but, like I said, the power falls with the tenants  
19 and people got to stop listen to the Residents to  
20 Preserve Public Housing and Marquise Jenkins, so you  
21 tenants got to come together, get all these frauds  
22 out the way. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you for your  
24 testimony.

25 You may start your testimony.

2 CAESAR GODWALL: Hello, Mr. Banks. How are  
3 you today?

4 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: I'm good. Thank you.

5 CAESAR GODWALL: Great. Hello, dear  
6 friends and neighbors. My name is Caesar Godwall. I  
7 proudly call Elliott Chelsea my home. Today, I stand  
8 before you to address an urgent and critical issue,  
9 the proposed RAD-PACT project at Elliott Chelsea  
10 Fulton Houses. This initiative spearheaded by foreign  
11 contractors poses a grave threat to the stability and  
12 well-being of our NYCHA residents. We must speak out  
13 now against the potential displacement of our  
14 neighbors and the ongoing injustices we are facing.  
15 The developer behind the project, Related Companies  
16 led by CEO Steve Ross, is poised to exploit our  
17 community in ways that are truly alarming. What began  
18 as a seemingly benign initiative has revealed itself  
19 to be a calculated strategy aimed at destabilizing,  
20 confusing, and ultimately displacing residents,  
21 citizens. This project was framed as a solution to  
22 our housing needs, but let me be clear, it is a  
23 façade, an elaborate hoax designed to serve the  
24 interests of developers, not the residents of Elliott  
25 Chelsea. Let's reflect on what happened on March 23.

2 Jerry Nadler who does not live in NYCHA collaborated  
3 with Mayor Adams and certain tenant association  
4 leaders to manipulate our voices. They conspired  
5 behind closed doors attempting to convince us that  
6 this RAD-PACT project was what we wanted. In reality,  
7 it was a plan to demolish our homes. The so-called  
8 resident survey they conducted claimed that 84  
9 percent of residents support keeping their homes.  
10 Let's not be fooled. The 16 percent that voted for  
11 the project is a significant vote of no confidence.  
12 This survey was merely a façade designed to create a  
13 false sense of consensus. The truth is that a  
14 substantial majority of us vehemently oppose this  
15 project. Moreover, related companies has taken over  
16 our tenant association...

17 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: 30 seconds to wrap it  
18 up.

19 CAESAR GODWALL: One more minute.

20 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: 30 seconds to wrap it  
21 up.

22 CAESAR GODWALL: Facilities, using them as  
23 business... Moreover, related companies have taken over  
24 our tenant association facilities using them as  
25 business offices without any compensation. This is a

2 blatant attempt to silence us and undermine our  
3 community engagement. Instead of supporting our  
4 efforts to organize, management has actively worked  
5 against us. They've removed our flyers, vandalized  
6 our properties, and harassed residents simply for  
7 trying to communicate with one another. This is  
8 nothing short of an assault on our voices and our  
9 rights and, if that's not enough, we are currently  
10 facing contractor fraud regarding lead paint  
11 inspections in my building. My building constructed  
12 in 1962 never had lead paint. Yet, we are being  
13 threatened with unnecessary inspections. In fact, in  
14 2021, my home was tested..

15 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you for your  
16 testimony, sir.

17 CAESAR GODWALL: I need to finish. We face  
18 intimidation tactics..

19 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you for your  
20 testimony.

21 CAESAR GODWALL: Threatening to break down  
22 doors and forcibly change locks.

23 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you for your  
24 testimony, sir.

2 CAESAR GODWALL: This is not negligence.  
3 It is intentional harassment...

4 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you for your  
5 testimony. You can supply...

6 CAESAR GODWALL: (INAUDIBLE)

7 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: You can definitely, if  
8 you want to...

9 CAESAR GODWALL: (INAUDIBLE)

10 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Yes, you may. Give it  
11 to the Sergeant-at-Arms. Thank you for your  
12 testimony. We hear your frustration.

13 LUCY NEWMAN: Good afternoon.

14 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Good afternoon.

15 LUCY NEWMAN: Thank you, Chair, for  
16 hosting us and having this hearing. My name is Lucy  
17 Newman. I'm the Supervising Attorney of the Legal Aid  
18 Society's Public Housing Unit. We represent public  
19 housing residents throughout the five boroughs.

20 In 2018, when the initial HUD agreement  
21 was signed, things at NYCHA couldn't have been worse  
22 as we all know. NYCHA admitted schemes to close work  
23 orders, the CEO at the time was fraudulently  
24 affirming lead paint inspections, property management  
25 manuals were found that had directed staff to lie to

2 inspectors, and Mr. Caban, an 84-year-old senior in  
3 Boston Road Plaza, had been killed when stepping into  
4 an elevator in his apartment. 2024, definitely  
5 there's progress. We heard about some of it today. As  
6 you know, they've been putting some systems in place  
7 throughout NYCHA including a Compliance Unit and some  
8 other units that were required under the monitorship,  
9 and there has been widespread lead and mold abatement  
10 work.

11 We do remain extremely concerned about a  
12 number of areas that we see daily through our clients  
13 that come to us and that we work with. Just to name a  
14 few, property management still does continue to be  
15 problematic. NYCHA mentioned earlier about the need  
16 for cultural change and change in attitude and,  
17 obviously, it's still slow coming and we see that on  
18 an individual basis for our clients who are treated  
19 pretty poorly when they try and get basic things  
20 addressed at their property management offices. We  
21 would call on there to be more training for staff on  
22 the ground so that they are actually aware of the  
23 procedures and policies that they're obligated to  
24 follow. In addition to that, there is huge IT and  
25 tech problems that we see. The CCC which is the 718-

2 707 number that residents have to call is very, very  
3 problematic. People wait ages to get their calls  
4 answered. In addition to that, there's been a huge  
5 push to go on to digital and self-service portals. We  
6 have huge difficulties uploading documents on our  
7 clients' behalf and we know that many people...

8 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: 30 more seconds to  
9 wrap it up.

10 LUCY NEWMAN: We know that many people are  
11 unable to do that but then they're unable to get the  
12 help that they're seeking from the CCC. Building  
13 safety and security remains a concern. You'll find  
14 every time you go to NYCHA, the doors are open.  
15 Policing and over-policing of these communities is  
16 not a way to provide safety so we urge people to  
17 focus at NYCHA on making these buildings safe and  
18 secure. In addition to that, developments that are  
19 undergoing... can you just please stop saying these  
20 offensive things to me? Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Can you remove him,  
22 please?

23 LUCY NEWMAN: We know that many  
24 developments that are...



2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Excuse me, ma'am. Hold  
3 on.

4 LUCY NEWMAN: I'll be very quick.

5 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you. You may  
6 proceed.

7 LUCY NEWMAN: All residents at NYCHA  
8 deserve and are entitled to live in safe and  
9 habitable homes. Just because a development is  
10 undergoing a PACT conversion or is facing a vote  
11 under the Trust Legislation does not mean that NYCHA  
12 can step away from taking care of those buildings as  
13 a landlord is obligated to do under the law so we  
14 urge NYCHA to continue looking after those  
15 developments. In addition to that, I do think that we  
16 should make sure that the City keeps looking at and  
17 maybe proposes a cap on the cost that are being spent  
18 by the monitor. You'll see that Bart Schwartz's  
19 office I think racked up about 70 million dollars of  
20 fees and I think that that's an important area that  
21 we should continue to look at. We urge the monitor  
22 and the City to continue fighting to get additional  
23 funding for public housing at a federal and a state  
24 level, and we know that the City stepped up an  
25 enormous amount of money under this agreement, but we

2 urge them to do more. I also implore the Committee to  
3 have a hearing...

4 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you for your  
5 testimony.

6 LUCY NEWMAN: Elliot Chelsea. Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you for your  
8 testimony.

9 You may proceed.

10 DARREN SEALEY: Good afternoon, Chair  
11 Banks and esteemed Members of the Committee on Public  
12 Housing. My name is Darren Sealey, and I serve as the  
13 Program Manager for the Housing Resource Center at  
14 the Red Hook Community Justice Center, an initiative  
15 of the Center for Justice Innovation. Thank you for  
16 the opportunity to testify today on behalf of our  
17 work supporting NYCHA residents.

18 Across the ,Center we work to prevent  
19 evictions, respond to hazardous repair conditions,  
20 and increase tenant financial and legal well-being.  
21 The Center often serves as a bridge between the court  
22 system, city agencies, legal service providers, and  
23 communities. Our neighborhood-based work supports  
24 tenants taking actions on repairs, rent and lease  
25 issues in NYCHA. Today, I would like to tell you two

2 critical issues we see daily in our court and  
3 community stemming from challenges with leaks and  
4 asbestos abatement. Since the start of the year, 85  
5 housing repair cases have been filed in our housing  
6 court by NYCHA residents of the Red Hook houses, many  
7 arising from leaks. Many of these cases display the  
8 inefficiencies of an agency that is not well enough  
9 equipped to provide habitable housing for its  
10 tenants. An apartment is your home, it's where you  
11 raise your family, it's where you share those  
12 precious moments together. We all deserve to feel  
13 safe in our own homes. Residents should not have to  
14 live with the physical, financial, and emotional  
15 consequences of reoccurring leaks and mold with no  
16 permanent solution in sight. This is a reality for  
17 many housing residents It's far too common for  
18 residents to submit work order tickets and then file  
19 housing repair cases in court when those work order  
20 tickets go unaddressed. These are reoccurring issues  
21 on a daily basis. These issues are also not isolated  
22 just to Red Hook. NYCHA needs to engage in small  
23 capital plans to resolve leak issues. Furthermore,  
24 while the new adaption of Healthy Homes as part of  
25 NYCHA's transformation plan is good progress and a

2 move in the right direction, we have seen shortfalls  
3 in the approach in dealing with asbestos abatements  
4 being conducted. Asbestos abatements are long-  
5 standing repair issues on the Red Hook Housing Court  
6 docket. Tenant frequently receive prolonged  
7 remediation timelines for...

8 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: 30 seconds to wrap it  
9 up.

10 DARREN SEALEY: Asbestos abatements for  
11 floor tiles. Considering that the mission of Healthy  
12 Homes is to eliminate dangerous health hazards, the  
13 program should receive necessary resources to conduct  
14 their work expeditiously. Both of the issues we  
15 highlighted here today reflect the need for a  
16 centralized strategy and more targeted resources to  
17 resolve pressing health issues residents are living  
18 in.

19 On a more positive note, we have seen how  
20 the neighborhood model has provided increased  
21 transparency to tenants around skilled trade tickets  
22 and minor repair issues Thank you again for the  
23 opportunity to testify.

24 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you for your  
25 testimony.

2 You may proceed.

3 SADIE GILL-FREDERICK: Hi, Chairman Banks.

4 My name is Sadie Gill-Frederick, and I'm a Riis  
5 resident. I just want to give you an overall  
6 experience of, like a walk in my life in terms of  
7 being in the development. So, there's dump trucks  
8 with construction debris uncovered, water shut off  
9 without notice, it's cloudy brown or yellow water,  
10 and we're told it's okay to resume using it. There's  
11 gas odors or leaks that have been reported to the  
12 point where there are gas specialist trucks parked on  
13 site as a regular occurrence. There's asbestos  
14 there's lead, there's arsenic. There's a constant  
15 hazard at Riis and other developments. Work orders  
16 are created but non-existent. When you follow up,  
17 you're told there's no vendor or no contract. The  
18 HA's lose your folder numerous times when it comes  
19 time for recertification or there's new HA's who are  
20 not familiar with the development or in terms of the  
21 rules and regulations, and they constantly violate  
22 the non-64 regs and our First Amendment rights for  
23 quality of life, clean water, and clean air. In  
24 regards to the PACT meeting that happened last week,  
25 I was there the first day and I cited the Sunrise Law

2 which is I should be able to come into a location for  
3 any public event and speak my mind freely but I was  
4 identified, they ID'd me outside the school as well  
5 as inside the school. A NYCHA worker mentioned to me  
6 why they have you sign up twice, why they ID'ing you  
7 both times, and it was so unnecessary. Also, the  
8 other thing is I was diagnosed with breast cancer. I  
9 know this is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and I was  
10 diagnosed on my 40th birthday, okay, and I took  
11 genetic testing nobody on my mother or my father's  
12 side has cancer. I was told it was environmental and  
13 then there's also a 23-year-old, one of my neighbors,  
14 their son passed, Justice for Gavin. He had to get  
15 double lung transplant. Just even thinking about it,  
16 it hurts. At the time when I was diagnosed, I didn't  
17 believe it. I just thought that it was me.

18 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: 30 seconds to wrap it  
19 up.

20 SADIE GILL-FREDERICK: I appreciate that,  
21 thank you, and then also when we had the arsenic  
22 (INAUDIBLE), which happened, they found lead in my  
23 daughter's system. They don't know if it was going in  
24 or it was going out her system. And then when they  
25 did the lead abatement last year, I had video footage

2 where you could see them taking showers in my  
3 apartment during a live lead abatement and stuff  
4 being stolen out of my apartment where Dan Green, Mr.  
5 Healthy Homes, has said that they will not believe  
6 you, those 15 second videos, and there's an  
7 environmental attorney that I'm working with, Joel  
8 Kupferman, who's aware as well so I'll be in  
9 business. You will hear my name more than once and  
10 you also will get whatever write-ups that I have in  
11 terms of emails where I got from one of their staff  
12 members who told me because of the leaks in my  
13 apartment because it faces the East River, that there  
14 is no contract or vendor, and I got it in writing, an  
15 email from them stating that the whole I side, but  
16 then I was told that it's everybody in Riis  
17 Apartments that's facing the East River when there's  
18 a rain, and then we got these like two ton, I want to  
19 say, like a big oh my god, it's like the tank on top  
20 of the roof so, when we had the earthquake, we  
21 couldn't distinguish between the regular cracks in  
22 the building versus the new cracks in the building,  
23 and they're expecting us to report to them as if we  
24 work for them when actually they worked for us.  
25 They're supposed to help us, and to sit here and say

2 you're with Healthy Homes, well obviously not,  
3 because when I had my issue and other residents had  
4 their issues, they disregarded it as if we're not  
5 even human. It's like, oh, well pick a green sticker  
6 or a red sticker. I got pictures of that too, where  
7 you can see slides 1 through 15 and they bypassed 1  
8 through 4 and went 5 to 15, and when I approached  
9 Jonathan and Simon who are the consultants for PACT,  
10 I said, is this a vote, and they said, no, this is  
11 not a vote, and I said, because what do you need the  
12 dots for, how can you distinguish between the dots  
13 that the residents are putting up versus what the  
14 NYCHA or whoever just randomly walks up in there, and  
15 they're like well, we just need it for data, data for  
16 what? To say that this is what we want, you know, but  
17 they said it's not a vote. I got that on recording  
18 too. So yeah, so if they come after me it's going to  
19 be in the clouds at this point because I'm tired of  
20 them constantly treating us as if we're subpar  
21 because we live in NYCHA, as if we're dumb. Like kids  
22 would do a sticker saying green I like and red I  
23 don't like.

24 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you.



2 SADIE GILL-FREDERICK: Can you imagine if  
3 we had a vote in a presidential like that? Oh my god.

4 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: I hear your  
5 frustrations.

6 SADIE GILL-FREDERICK: Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you for your  
8 testimony.

9 We're going to have the next panel, Judy  
10 Wade, Alica Griggs, and Manuel Martinez.

11 Starting to my left, you may proceed.

12 JUDY WADE: Okay, hi. My name is Judy  
13 Wade, and I live in Jacob Riis Houses. Okay, right  
14 now, the situation with this PACT program, our TA  
15 board members, they're not supporting the tenants.  
16 They're insubordinate. When we ask questions, they  
17 evade the questions. When it's time for questioning,  
18 they say, oh, we're going to do it later on, and they  
19 evade the questions, they don't answer Okay, this  
20 PACT program here, they're just pushing over. You got  
21 a lot of people out here. Asians in the area and  
22 Puerto Ricans people that don't understand what's  
23 going on. They're preying on the seniors. Just like  
24 she said with them little dots, they got them going  
25 around with them dots and I'm like what is that? You

2 know, this is how they're doing their vote so we  
3 asked about the vote for the RAD-PACT program. Well,  
4 they said the TA is going to vote for it. I said no  
5 the H-E-double-L they won't, okay, and they came and  
6 approached me and I told myself I'll get legal  
7 assistance. I'm not dealing with this. You all have  
8 to make this vote more transparent. Okay, so now when  
9 I ask him again, he said, oh, now they got to push  
10 the vote back, and the thing is with this vote thing,  
11 to me, this seems like a Ponzi scheme because they  
12 just came in out of nowhere with this PACT program,  
13 nobody knew nothing about it They didn't come and ask  
14 us what we wanted. They just pushed and bullied their  
15 way up in there, you know, and we don't want what  
16 they're doing because what I see here is that they  
17 gave us to housing to them, and housing is pawning us  
18 off because as they keep giving the money for housing  
19 to these PACT people. They're raising the rent. They  
20 say they won't do it, but they will. They'll find  
21 ways to get us out of here and build them into  
22 condominiums. These pictures that they're showing us  
23 of how they're going to redecorate and do everything,  
24 I got pictures of that too, this is all kind of, he  
25 said resident, I said that's the key word..

2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: 30 more seconds to  
3 wrap up.

4 JUDY WADE: Okay, they're going to turn  
5 this, they want everybody out of here into  
6 condominiums. I live in a one-bedroom apartment. Now  
7 they're talking about they're going to move me to a  
8 studio. No, you know, and then you got health  
9 problems with the work that they'll be doing, the way  
10 that they're doing it. I have lupus. I got lupus when  
11 I first moved in here. Okay, the thing I don't  
12 understand, it took two weeks before, I could move  
13 into the apartment for the person to come and  
14 inspect. Okay, they let me move in. What did the  
15 inspector do? The mold was there, the lead was there,  
16 all of that's there. It took two weeks for me to move  
17 in for the inspector, but they let me move in to that  
18 so now I'm sick as hell, you got a lot of people that  
19 got sicker. Then they got this generator on the roof.  
20 They didn't ask nobody about and tell people what  
21 it's going to do. I said it's going to make noise.  
22 Every night it's like being a human microwave, hmm,  
23 hmm, all day. The first two floors, this is what's  
24 going on. They don't care about the tenants. They're  
25 not asking us what we want. They're not working with

2 the tenants so, you know, that's just stress. Every  
3 day you got to wake up stressed, worrying about are  
4 they going to take you out your home, are you going  
5 to be put in the streets? I've been there, because I  
6 lived in Brooklyn when they did it to some place  
7 where I was living. They said they're going to put us  
8 up. They set us out in the street and said Red Cross,  
9 we were out in the cold and the rain, and I refuse to  
10 be homeless again because these people want to steal  
11 our lives and our homes. These are high property  
12 organizations.

13 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you, ma'am.

14 Thank you for your testimony. I hear your frustration  
15 and your concerns and your fears.

16 Next. You may proceed, ma'am.

17 ALICA GRIGGS: Good afternoon, Council.

18 This is my son, Michael Gavin Centron. You may not be  
19 able to see from there, but this is my only child. He  
20 passed away September 8th of 2022 with the whole  
21 debacle of arsenic going on. It is in fact true, even  
22 though they denied it and they redacted it the same  
23 day my son passed away in the hospital, and they  
24 evaded any and all tests to prove it, but I know  
25 something went wrong because there are serious

2 environmental hazards that I did not know about and I  
3 feel completely blindsided as well as other tenants,  
4 I'm sure. As far as Jacob Riis House standing over an  
5 old manufacturing gas plant site, that's emitting  
6 coal tar, volatile chemicals, benzene, toluene,  
7 silica dust, everything. We brought it to the  
8 attention of the environmental lawyer, Joel  
9 Kupferman. We even scoped out the DEC, and they  
10 weren't following protocol when we brought it to  
11 their attention of the steam intruding into the  
12 apartments. Other people have also passed away. My  
13 son passed away. He needed a double lung transplant.  
14 He had pulmonary fibrosis, which is nearly unheard of  
15 for anyone in that age category, and that's because  
16 of the asbestos, the lead, the mold, everything. It's  
17 a horrible environment that I didn't think this type  
18 of thing still existed, you know, like why is this  
19 stuff even there? Asbestos was banned in 1990. They  
20 came into my apartment because I had to argue with  
21 them to test. They ran no test. Back in 2021 when my  
22 son was sick and we didn't know why, I called the  
23 federal monitor and spoke with Joe Jaffe and a whole  
24 bunch of people over there. We even went down to  
25 their office in Midtown to show them the water and

2 how tainted it was and my son drank that water and,  
3 while he was sick, I was giving him that water,  
4 making him tea, thinking I'm making him better and  
5 August the 3rd, 4th, he went into the hospital to get  
6 better, came back on August 12th, went back to the  
7 25th of August...

8 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: 30 seconds to wrap it  
9 up.

10 JUDY WADE: And he needed 15 liters of  
11 oxygen. They were doing all this construction around  
12 our building, not following protocol, and the EMS  
13 couldn't even get in and he was in respiratory  
14 failure. I mean, this is absolutely ridiculous and I  
15 think in a court of law, they're not going to hold me  
16 liable to pay them anything, I'm not paying them one  
17 red cent. All of our civil rights have been violated.  
18 I do not agree and we got granted a transfer a year  
19 ago and they haven't done anything. Management's not  
20 doing anything. They're sending bogus notices.  
21 They're not taking me to court. They're not doing  
22 anything. It doesn't make sense that my son got this  
23 sick. I had a rare skin sarcoma. I had breast cancer.  
24 Three years back-to-back, this is what I dealt with.  
25 '18, '19, '20 through '22, my son was sick and passed

2 away and when we went to the town hall meeting on the  
3 9th, it made sense. I told my son, I promised him I  
4 will get to the bottom of this and I did and I know  
5 damn well that this residence where I live, I didn't  
6 always live in NYCHA, made my son deathly ill. It  
7 targets people. It compromises DNA. It targets  
8 different organs. I've educated myself and done my  
9 research. Thank you for listening.

10 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Sorry for your loss,  
11 ma'am.

12 JUDY WADE: Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And I hear your  
14 frustration. Thank you for your testimony.

15 JUDY WADE: Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Mr. Martinez.

17 MANUEL MARTINEZ: Good afternoon, Council  
18 Member and Public Housing Committee. Listening to the  
19 testimonies today and throughout the years that I've  
20 done my advocacy, my name is Manny Martinez. I'm the  
21 Resident Council President of South Jamaica Houses.  
22 I'm also the Queen's South District Chair, which is  
23 an alliance of resident councils from Far Rockaway to  
24 South Jamaica. Today's meeting was about the Federal  
25 Monitor, about the 2019 agreement. In that 2019

2 agreement, Line 53 is very crucial because it's the  
3 only component in that agreement that speaks to the  
4 residents, right, indirectly in the sense that  
5 compliance is an issue. The NYCHA Compliance  
6 Department was created because of Line 53 which it  
7 mandated for that Compliance Department to be created  
8 and to make sure that factual statements come from  
9 NYCHA given the lies that were given out with the  
10 lead scandal with Shola Olatoye and also they have to  
11 make sure that NYCHA is in accordance with local,  
12 federal and state laws. Currently, right now, we have  
13 a challenge. We have several resident councils who  
14 have put a challenge, a dispute within our rights as  
15 resident councils, as representatives to demand  
16 recognition of the Citywide Council of Presidents. We  
17 have also demonstrated evidence to NYCHA that with  
18 NYCHA's own documentation that they created the  
19 Citywide Council of Presidents, that the Citywide  
20 Council of Presidents is a creation of the Housing  
21 Authority which violates the resident organizing  
22 rights that we have as public housing residents. A  
23 lot of people don't realize that today's public  
24 housing comes from Civil Rights era amendments, the  
25 Brooke Amendment in 1969, that is supposed to counter



2 these experiences that we still continue here. When  
3 we have the Housing Authority that is creating  
4 resident organizations to silence us and also, if I  
5 may.

6 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: 30 seconds to wrap it  
7 up.

8 MANUEL MARTINEZ: To silence us and to  
9 also manipulate our rights, to diminish our voice and  
10 have our population, because NYCHA's population is  
11 the largest public housing Black and Hispanic  
12 population in the country, in the Western Hemisphere  
13 of Earth, to have them manipulate elections, to  
14 create resident organizations and then to not respond  
15 to our disputes because they can't, I guess for over  
16 a year, that's a problem. We're asking for the Public  
17 Housing Committee to take a look at this. I've sent  
18 some documents to your office, Council Member, that's  
19 evidencing this and I have some more. We also have  
20 issues with HUD, where HUD now is not following their  
21 own clearance procedures as they communicate to the  
22 public and NYCHA is using that to their advantage.  
23 Thank you, sir.

24 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you, panel, for  
25 your testimony.

2                   We are now going to proceed to our  
3 virtual testimony.

4                   The first person is Cynthia Tibbs.

5                   CYNTHIA TIBBS: Good afternoon, yes. My  
6 name is Cynthia Tibbs. I'm the TA President of the  
7 Westside Urban Renewal Brownstones. We are located on  
8 the Upper Westside, 36 buildings. I'm also the second  
9 Vice Chair of Manhattan South DCOP. Let's make it  
10 very clear, this is a monitor's meeting. We have yet  
11 to even get an introductory letter from the monitor's  
12 office letting us know who they are, who's in charge  
13 of what borough, and how we can contact them. I don't  
14 know if this is being done maliciously because they  
15 went into a contract with NYCHA, from what I'm told,  
16 where they're not getting paid for the first year  
17 that they sit on this panel, but they have not worked  
18 with us at all. They only have two TA Presidents that  
19 sit on the round table, so the only communication  
20 they're getting are from those two, and that does  
21 nothing for the rest of us. This nonsense has got to  
22 stop. They talk about they're working great with  
23 NYCHA. Well, I guess they are because they're lying  
24 today as much as NYCHA lied under oath. No one takes  
25 this oath thing you guys do seriously. We're the ones

2 that work every day with our residents. We are not  
3 paid. NYCHA's so busy promoting themselves into  
4 higher positions that pay more money, but yet you  
5 can't get through to a call center for over an hour  
6 because they laid off half the call center because  
7 they're so busy going automated. Regarding RAD and  
8 PACT, once they turn all these cheap cosmetic  
9 upgrades over to the private developers, they in turn  
10 have nothing to do with NYCHA residents, and they  
11 have no oversight over the PACT developments. I have  
12 been to meetings where residents have begged to come  
13 back to NYCHA only to be told no because there's no  
14 representation for NYCHA there, and if I sound  
15 frustrated, it's because I only get two minutes to  
16 speak when NYCHA gets to come up in there with their  
17 slides and their pretty pictures and swear to you  
18 that, oh, it's this reason and that reason. They're  
19 looking..

20 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Thank you. Your time is  
21 expired.

22 CYNTHIA TIBBS: For their numbers to go  
23 down. They're looking looking for their numbers to go  
24 down.

2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you, Ms. Tibbs,  
3 for your testimony. Thank you, Ms. Tibbs, for your  
4 testimony.

5 Dana Elden.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: You may begin.

7 DANA ELDEN: Good afternoon, Chairman  
8 Banks, Council Members, monitors, NYCHA officials,  
9 and fellow resident leaders. My name is Dana Elden,  
10 and I'm President of St. Mary's Park Houses. It's a  
11 pleasure to finally address the Federal Monitor  
12 Group. I have been attempting to reach them since  
13 February, oh, shit, I'm sorry. I've been attempting  
14 to reach them since February 2024. In the past,  
15 Federal Monitor Board Schwartz held monthly meetings  
16 with the different boroughs that enabled us to have a  
17 conversation and sometimes corrections noted. I  
18 personally have emailed them numerous times since  
19 their beginning and received no response other than  
20 to say that they received my email. We are mixed  
21 finance development with 1,007 apartments and 210  
22 Section 8 apartments. When you try to reach the call  
23 center, we are getting no responses. For me, the  
24 definite issue with our heating system, which I  
25 indicated to them that zone valves should be added to

2 our system, the average cost of a zone valve is 25 to  
3 100 dollars. It took almost a year for them to be  
4 installed. Consequently, since their installation,  
5 they have not worked properly for several reasons.  
6 The zone valves are supposed to be attached to a  
7 thermostat and a monitor control panel for the  
8 temperature. If it is a fluctuating temperature, then  
9 the control panel gets the signal to turn off or turn  
10 on the heat. This past weekend, Friday to Monday  
11 morning, the temperatures went from 48 to 54 degrees  
12 in the evenings and beyond. During this period, I  
13 contacted heating supervisory staff a couple of times  
14 for assistance to know if their apartments here were  
15 cold. I received 18 complaints from residents who  
16 first attempted to use my NYCHA...

17 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Thank you. Your time's  
18 expired.

19 DANA ELDEN: Can I please finish? The  
20 (INAUDIBLE) did not work.

21 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: 30 seconds. Please  
22 wrap it up.

23 DANA ELDEN: The statement was posted  
24 untrue that we were offline and the call center could  
25 not be contacted. It was my concern that the

2 residents get their heat. I then called Mr. Green,  
3 who is present there, and so the whole weekend went  
4 without heat until Monday morning at 9:30 a.m. I am a  
5 cancer patient, sir, and my health is very important  
6 to me and so freezing in my bed with clothes on was  
7 not my idea of any kind of service that I'm deserving  
8 of. As far as I'm concerned, NYCHA has not fulfilled  
9 their promise to give us the service that we need.  
10 The federal monitor needs to open up the door and  
11 speak to some of us out here in the field who are  
12 working hard every day for no pay to serve our  
13 communities. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you for your  
15 testimony.

16 We have Christina Chaise.

17 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: You may begin.

18 CHRISTINA CHAISE: Hi. Can you hear me?

19 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: We can hear you, Miss  
20 Chaise.

21 CHRISTINA CHAISE: Okay. Thank you. Hi.  
22 Good afternoon. My name is Christina Chaise. I am a  
23 resident at Ravenswood Houses where I sit on the  
24 Resident Association Board as Second Vice President.  
25 I guess in a nutshell, we still need transparency

2 over the contracted labor and oversight. I'm sorry  
3 about the music in the background. I'm at a Halloween  
4 party for the kids in our neighborhood. I'm really  
5 sad that our date was chosen for Halloween because  
6 many of us TA members are holding down events in our  
7 community. But anyway, we still need transparency  
8 over contracted labor and oversight over the quality  
9 of work, particularly when it comes to debris from  
10 lead and asbestos abatement. Tenants have witnessed  
11 sloppy jobs that included debris in the hallways,  
12 elevators, and outside of the building, including  
13 myself. As mentioned earlier, although NYCHA has done  
14 a better job at responding to elevator outages, the  
15 outages are all too frequent. For example, I remember  
16 an outage last January in 2023 that resulted in me  
17 having to carry my newborn son in a heavy car seat  
18 down six flights of stairs after having a cesarean  
19 section. That's major abdominal surgery just a few  
20 days before against medical advisement of no lifting.  
21 I'm not sure what irreparable damage I've done to  
22 myself simply for taking my son to a doctor's  
23 appointment, but this is just an example of the  
24 everyday indignities we have to endure and the  
25 indirect ways repair needs impact our health. We need

2 a system for preventative maintenance and repair, not  
3 just responding to repairs for our elevators and  
4 every other pillar, and we need stronger enforcement  
5 of regulations from the Federal Monitor's office.

6 I'd be remiss to be here and not  
7 communicate the concerns of Ravenswood residents.  
8 Besides cleanliness of the corridors and public  
9 spaces, three items I want to discuss in particular  
10 are windows, radiator covers, and NYPD floodlights.  
11 My seniors keep asking me how they can get their  
12 windows cleaned from the exterior. Management has  
13 told me that NYCHA does not clean windows. I'm unsure  
14 if this is a liability policy or a funding issue, but  
15 our residents should not have to live in this  
16 situation.

17 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Thank you. Your time is  
18 expired.

19 CHRISTINA CHAISE: All right, I will send  
20 it to you, and I hope to engage the office further.  
21 Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you, Ms. Chaise.  
23 Thank you for your testimony.

24 That concludes today's meeting. We want  
25 to thank everyone who came out today, and I'm looking



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2 forward to continue to advocate for the residents of  
3 NYCHA. Thank you so much. This meeting is adjourned.

4 [GAVEL]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date November 14, 2024