

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

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December 4, 2008  
Start: 1:21 pm  
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HELD AT: Council Chambers  
City Hall

B E F O R E:  
JOEL RIVERA  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
Helen Sears  
Rosie Mendez  
Kendall Stewart  
Inez E. Dickens

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

Edgar Butts  
Assistant Commissioner for Veterinary and Pest Control  
Services  
NYC Department of Health and Mental Health

Robert Corrigan  
Rodentologist  
NYC Department of Health and Mental Health

Dan Kass  
Assistant Commissioner of Environmental Science and  
Policy  
NYC Department of Health and Mental Health

Paul Schubert  
Rockaways Tiger

COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Good

afternoon, I am not Chair Rivera, but the Chair of the Health Committee is at a leadership meeting.

My name is Rosie Mendez and I am a member of this Committee and on behalf of most of the Committee,

who's at the leadership meeting, we're happy to have everyone here to discuss this important

subject, rodent control strategy. Rodents are a

major problem plaguing large urban cities. These

areas have conditions that are conducive to

infestation, making it difficult to control the

rodent population. Rodents are detrimental to the

quality of life in communities, damage

infrastructure, and cause public health concerns.

In the United States, it has been estimated that

rodents cause between 500 million and 1 billion

worth of damage annually. In addition, each

individual rat causes between 1 and \$10 worth of

damage to food. The scope of this problem is

clear in our city. In 2003, an analysis performed

by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

revealed that approximately 680,000 households

reported seeing mice or rats, or signs of them, in

their homes or residential buildings. Last year,

1  
2 the Department received more than 23,000 rodent  
3 complaints--an increase from fiscal year 2007.  
4 While complaints about rodents have been on the  
5 rise, the Department has taken some positive steps  
6 toward combating this major problem. Department  
7 uses an integrated pest management approach that  
8 allows it to better target resources to where they  
9 most need it. Additionally, the Department offers  
10 a myriad of services and programs. I will let the  
11 Department go into depth about these programs, but  
12 I would like to specifically acknowledge the  
13 hiring of acclaimed urban rodentologist Dr. Bobby  
14 Corrigan. The block-by-block pilot program in the  
15 Bronx and most recently the launch of the Rat  
16 patrol--Portal, a one-stop resource for  
17 information about rodent prevention. Today, we  
18 will explore the effectiveness of the Department'  
19 strategies and initiatives in combating rodents  
20 throughout our city. Rodents are a common  
21 complaint in particular communities and we want to  
22 ensure that our constituents have the necessary  
23 information that they need to combat this problem.  
24 Clearly, the only way to reduce our city's rodent  
25 infestation is through a direct partnership

1  
2 between government and residents. As city  
3 residents, proactive steps can be taken to reduce  
4 the prevalence of rodents and government can aid  
5 in this effort through outreach and education. I  
6 would like to thank the staff of the committee for  
7 their hard work. I also would like to add I held  
8 a rat forum just two weeks ago, over a hundred  
9 residents showed up, more called the office and  
10 said they would have shown up, but they were  
11 afraid to leave their homes because of all the  
12 rats that are in the streets. But we had multiple  
13 agencies there and this is clearly a problem that  
14 needs to be attacked on several levels. And I  
15 want to thank the panelists who are here today on  
16 behalf of the City: Department of Health and  
17 Mental Health, Robert Corrigan, Dan Kass, and  
18 Edgar Butts. And when you read your testimony or  
19 whenever you speak, if you could just identify  
20 yourself for the records. Thank you.

21 [Pause]

22 [Off mic]

23 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: You need to  
24 press the little button so the red light--oh yeah,  
25 okay, it should be on now.

1  
2 EDGAR BUTTS: Okay. It's on, okay,  
3 thank you. Good afternoon, Chairperson Rivera and  
4 members of the New York City Council Health  
5 Committee. I am Edgar Butts, Assistant  
6 Commissioner for Veterinary and Pest Control  
7 Services of the New York City Department of Health  
8 and Mental Hygiene. Sitting with me to my direct  
9 left is Dr. Robert Corrigan, our resident  
10 rodentologist and to his left is Daniel Kass,  
11 who's Assistant Commissioner for the Bureau of  
12 Environmental Science and Policy. On behalf of  
13 Commissioner Frieden, thank you for the  
14 opportunity to testify before you today. The  
15 mission of Pest Control Services is to maintain  
16 both public--both the public health and the  
17 quality of life of citizens of New York by using  
18 our authority under the City's Health Code to  
19 reduce rat populations. Pest Control has three  
20 primary roles in the control of rats: first, to  
21 identify rodent problems and their source; second,  
22 is to enforce the remediation of rodent  
23 infestations by property owners; and, finally,  
24 it's to conduct outreach and education to promote  
25 the reduction of rats through better management of

1  
2 property and environmental factors that contribute  
3 to increases in rodents. Rodent control has been  
4 a challenge in New York City since colonial times,  
5 and continues to be a top priority of the  
6 Department of Health. Controlling rodent  
7 infestation is a complex issue involving garbage  
8 handling, infrastructure and housing quality,  
9 individual human behavior, rodent population  
10 cycles, and the natural environment. Rodent  
11 control can only be effective when the source of  
12 infestation is identified and eliminated along  
13 with available food, water, and shelter.

14 Traditionally, Pest Control has identified and  
15 responded to rodent problems through individual  
16 complaints from New York City residents. Today,  
17 because of the ease of reporting sightings through  
18 311, the number of complaints has increased from  
19 15,000 annually to approximately 25,000 annually  
20 since 2004. As we continue to strive to improve  
21 the effectiveness of the rodent control program,  
22 the use of new technology and analytical tools, we  
23 are moving away from the complaint-based system to  
24 proactively holding private property owners and  
25 other city agencies accountable and involving

1 communities more directly in addressing the causes  
2 of rodent infestations. I would like to  
3 acknowledge the importance of City Council funding  
4 last year in helping us launch many efforts--the  
5 many efforts undertaken by the Department of  
6 Health. The Council's support enabled us to  
7 purchase handheld devices, vehicles, and enhance  
8 our baiting program, begin to build a new database  
9 system to help better manage the program, and to  
10 develop the Rat Informational--Information Portal.  
11 In these difficult fiscal times, all the city's  
12 programs are working hard to improve efficiency  
13 and meet increasing needs with limited funding.  
14 We will continue to maximize available resources  
15 for efficient rodent management and work  
16 collaboratively, both inside and outside of the  
17 government, to promote policies and initiatives  
18 that will encourage the reduction of rats in our  
19 city. Pest Control Services conducts inspections,  
20 issues abatement orders, checks compliance with  
21 violation notices, safely places rodent bait, and  
22 removes garbage and debris from properties with  
23 violations when property owners fail to do so in a  
24 timely manner. If our first inspection detects  
25

1  
2 signs of rats, the owner is identified and issued  
3 a Commissioner's Order to Abate, with a copy of  
4 the inspection results notifying the owner to the  
5 correct conditions--notifying the owner to correct  
6 conditions that are attracting or harboring  
7 rodents and exterminate within five days. We  
8 conduct a follow-up compliance inspection shortly  
9 thereafter, if conditions are not improved, the  
10 property owner is issued a Notice of Violation.  
11 If a property owner again does not correct the  
12 violation, Pest Control may then apply  
13 rodenticides and or clean the property and charge  
14 the owner for the service. Pest Control  
15 collaborates with 19 government agencies through  
16 the Rodent Task Force to monitor and control  
17 rodent problems throughout the city. The task  
18 force uses a proactive and effective approach to  
19 enhance interagency cooperation for solving rodent  
20 problems, including identifying high-risk areas  
21 and conducting activity to reduce rodent activity  
22 in these areas through multi-agency intervention.  
23 Our rodent--our New York City Rodent Academy  
24 program has trained over 1,000 New York City  
25 employees in integrated pest management and best

1  
2 practices. The program and its curriculum was  
3 developed and is taught by Dr. Robert Corrigan,  
4 sitting to my left. Pest Control handles a large  
5 volume of rodent control cases quickly and  
6 effectively. More than 80,000 inspections and  
7 60,000 rodenticide applications were conducted in  
8 FY '08. More critical complaints, such as rodent  
9 bites and severe rodent infestations, are  
10 addressed within 24 hours. Complaints about  
11 property owned by governmental agencies are  
12 generally referred directly to the owning or  
13 managing agency, but when Pest Control finds  
14 violations in public property, we notify the  
15 agency so it can remove the violations. This  
16 complaint-driven approach is successful from a  
17 commercial--from a customer service perspective  
18 and for improving individual properties, but  
19 rarely achieves the degree of sustained activity  
20 in any one area necessary to significantly and  
21 permanently reduce the number of rats. The  
22 centerpiece of our proactive strategy is the  
23 Rodent Indexing Program being piloted in the Bronx  
24 and launched in December 2007. This program is  
25 based on the concept that rats rarely inhibit a

1  
2 single property--rather, they occupy entire blocks  
3 or larger areas, and when these properties are  
4 addressed simultaneously, the effectiveness of our  
5 efforts will be enhanced. This program is very  
6 different than past efforts because it's based on  
7 a collection and analysis of data throughout the  
8 process. In the Rodent Indexing pilot, we have  
9 identified about two-thirds of the Bronx with  
10 historically higher complaints of rats. All  
11 properties in this area were inspected once during  
12 the first six months of the project and are being  
13 inspected a second time for signs of rats and  
14 conditions that contribute to rats. Our staff  
15 uses handheld computers to facilitate data  
16 collection and analysis methods, and to speed both  
17 inspections and our ability to mail notices of  
18 findings to property owners. Bronx property  
19 owners have received enhanced inspection reports  
20 and a copy of a detailed guide on how to rid their  
21 properties of rats. Since the program began, Pest  
22 Control has inspected more than 61,000 properties.  
23 This number is compared to 25,000 properties in  
24 the rest of the city during the same period of  
25 time. Where owners failed to comply, we will now

1  
2 apply bait up to four visits for each property.  
3 The minimum--or the primary results of this  
4 program have been very encouraging. We found that  
5 in the six months between the first and the second  
6 rounds of inspections, the percentage of  
7 properties that have rat signs have fell by or  
8 been reduced by 35%--it went from 8.5% in the  
9 first round to 5.5 in the second. In addition,  
10 owners have more--are more likely to successfully  
11 comply with our orders in the Bronx than the rest  
12 of the city. So far, 75% of the properties that  
13 were identified with rodent problems in the first  
14 round no longer had rodent problems in the second  
15 round. We have increased our efforts to educate  
16 owners and other community members as part of our  
17 Indexing program in the Bronx. The work has  
18 included periodic meetings with elected officials,  
19 including the Council's Bronx delegation, meetings  
20 with the Bronx community boards and community-  
21 based organizations for regular updates on our  
22 progress, wide distribution of a guide on  
23 preventing rats, a series of one-day sessions on  
24 rat management and Bronx-based landlords and  
25 building supervisors or superintendents,

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2 distribution of rat resistant trash cans,  
3 assisting Parks--the Parks Department in rodent  
4 management in parks, including more extensive and  
5 regular baiting of parks, and the launch of the  
6 Rodent Information Portal, which Dan Kass will  
7 talk about shortly. I'd like to thank you for the  
8 opportunity to address this important issue and  
9 for your continued support in our rodent  
10 management efforts. At this time, we would like  
11 to give you a brief presentation on our latest  
12 technology, our handheld inspection system, and  
13 the Rodent Information Portal. We have received  
14 excellent feedback on the portal. Following the  
15 presentations, we would be happy to answer your  
16 questions. Thank you.

17 DAN KASS: Hi everyone, I'm Dan  
18 Kass, Assistant Commissioner for Environmental  
19 Surveillance and Policy. Do you want us to pause  
20 or would you like us just to continue and then--

21 COUNCIL MEMBER STEWART: Could you  
22 put the--I think it's off.

23 DAN KASS: I'm sorry.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER STEWART: Press the  
25 mic.

1

DAN KASS: This one?

2

COUNCIL MEMBER STEWART: Yeah.

3

FEMALE VOICE: It's on.

4

DAN KASS: Let me just--

5

COUNCIL MEMBER STEWART: [off mic]

6

DAN KASS: --yeah, let me just put

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it closer to myself. So let me just briefly tell

8

you a little bit about some of the new technology

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that we've been employing for managing rats and

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let me also acknowledge again that much of the

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work that I'm about to just show you really came

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from Council funding and we're very--you know,

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we're very pleased that we were able to succeed,

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with spending most of that and also to build these

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important things. So Dr. Butts has already

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alluded to the Bronx Rodent Initiative, in the

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Bronx Rodent Initiative, we've replaced a paper-

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based inspectional program with a highly efficient

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handheld technology program--I'm sorry, it's not

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showing up entirely on the screen so I apologize

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for that, it's cut off over on the left. So with

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[crosstalk]--

23

COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ:

24

[Interposing] That always happens to those of us

25

1  
2 who are on the left, but let's see what we can do  
3 here. Is there anything you can do, no?

4 DAN KASS: It's a--yeah it looks  
5 like it's a resolution issue. I'll let you know  
6 if there's anything substantial that's being cut  
7 off. So with these handheld computers, we're able  
8 to do much more rapid inspections--in fact, the  
9 productivity of inspectors has gone up more than  
10 tenfold with these. On the screen itself we  
11 developed an application where maps guide and  
12 illustrate the inspection findings--I should point  
13 out that there's a copy of this presentation in  
14 your packets that were distributed to you. And  
15 what's also valuable about this inspectional  
16 program is that the computer prompts a  
17 scientifically informed inspectional questionnaire  
18 that allows and requires every inspector to  
19 commonly inspect every property across a range of  
20 conditions, including whether there were tracks or  
21 droppings, burrows, active runs, gnawings, or  
22 signs of live rats themselves. We also note on  
23 properties whether there are garbage or other  
24 harborage conditions, whether the property should  
25 be referred for cleanup, as well as a number of

1  
2 other subject areas. Now one of the things this  
3 map shows you--and I'm going to just show you in a  
4 slightly different approach in this presentation--  
5 is that we've had tremendous preliminary success  
6 with the program and, again, I want to distinguish  
7 this proactive one, where we get to every property  
8 regardless of complaint, to the general city  
9 approach, where we rely or depend almost entirely  
10 on complaints. So what you're missing over on the  
11 left here is a banner that says Community Board 4  
12 in the Bronx and this is what we found in winter  
13 2008, this is to illustrate our findings, and you  
14 can see that every red property here we found  
15 signs of rats. The second round of inspection was  
16 a really dramatic change and this was conducted  
17 mostly over the summer of 2008 where--and I can go  
18 back and forth--you'll see these dramatic changes  
19 over the course of a time, in fact, when we would  
20 expect rats to go up because the season has gotten  
21 warmer and we've had really tremendous success in  
22 ridding most properties of rats, but not all. The  
23 initiative so far has also led to improvements in  
24 every Community Board in the Bronx that we've  
25 completed, so these show round one in blue and

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2 round two in purple, inspection results for  
3 Community Boards it shows the number of  
4 inspections that have found signs of rats in each  
5 of these Community Boards and you see a uniform  
6 improvement with particular improvements in  
7 certain areas. I also want to just mention a  
8 couple of things about the Rat Information Portal,  
9 we're going to show you on a slide, but you could-  
10 -obviously, you can visit this with your own  
11 computers at [nyc.gov/rats](http://nyc.gov/rats) we now have a one-stop  
12 shop where we offer comprehensive advice on rat  
13 control. We provide clear directives to owners,  
14 to tenants, and to pest management professionals,  
15 and we include information that is both  
16 scientifically informed, but we also provide more  
17 tools than we've provided in the past, including  
18 model inspection forms, model service agreements  
19 that property owners can use with pest control  
20 professionals, as well as a variety of other best  
21 practice advice. On the portal and in your  
22 packets are guides that we now mail to every  
23 landlord who receives a Notice of Violation from  
24 the Health Department in the Bronx, we have it in  
25 Spanish and Chinese, as well as in English and

1  
2 these are also available via 311. To date we've  
3 distributed, I believe, more than 50,000 of these  
4 across the city. Now in the Rat Portal, we also  
5 have a mapping feature and what we do is enable  
6 users to view data about our activity in a variety  
7 of different ways: they can look at inspection  
8 results, compliance results, and extermination  
9 activities that the department conducts at a  
10 property level. They can look for property  
11 histories for a particular site to see what we've  
12 done over the last couple of years and they can  
13 compare neighborhoods and track improvements over  
14 time by looking at rates of active rat signs,  
15 percentage of properties where we find it, the  
16 number of exterminations we've conducted or the  
17 number of cleanups that the Department has  
18 conducted as well. And we also enable people to  
19 print high-quality maps in a variety of formats  
20 for use in meetings, we envision business  
21 improvement districts, community organizations,  
22 block associations, elected officials, and others  
23 to make use of this feature to try to identify  
24 neighborhoods or blocks in need of additional  
25 services and activities that they can undertake in

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2 parallel with the Department for improving  
3 conditions. So with that, I'll pause and we're  
4 prepared to take comments or questions. Thank  
5 you.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Thank you.  
7 We've been joined by our Chair, Chair Rivera, and  
8 Councilwoman Dickens from Manhattan and we were  
9 joined much earlier by Council Member Stewart from  
10 Brooklyn. And, Mr. Chair, do I ask a few  
11 questions while you get caught up to speed?

12 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Go right ahead.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Okay. Thank  
14 you. This is very interesting what you're doing  
15 in the Bronx and--but I want to ask you some  
16 questions about your testimony because about a  
17 couple of years ago I had a big problem in my  
18 district and I started working with the homeowners  
19 on that block, and they had called in the  
20 violations and they had gotten services of a  
21 private person to do the rat abatement, who was  
22 doing it wrong. And they're trying to figure out  
23 how to abate the problem and then DOHMH with the  
24 Rat Task Force, whoever ended up coming, ended up  
25 giving the homeowners who were making the

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2 complaint actual violations, so they were  
3 attempting to abate the problem. So is--when you  
4 say, in the first page of your testimony, the last  
5 paragraph, that the first inspection detects signs  
6 of rats, the owners identified and issued a  
7 summons, do you look at other measures that have  
8 taken by, I don't know, like if they called this  
9 in, if they hired people taking extra measures  
10 instead of just--you know, they may be the  
11 offending owner, but they may not be in this case.

12 EDGAR BUTTS: Okay. It's--first of  
13 all, it's important to understand the process and  
14 what we do when we go out on our first--when we go  
15 out to inspect the first time, a violation is--or  
16 a notice is given that they are in violation.  
17 They are given a period of time to take care of  
18 that problem. And then after five days, and it's  
19 usually 10 or maybe 15 days, we try to get back as  
20 quick as we can, but we do give the homeowner  
21 ample time to correct the problem. If we go back  
22 and do a compliance inspection--that's after the  
23 initial inspection--if we go back and do a  
24 compliance inspection and the problem has not been  
25 mitigated, then we would give a notice of

1 violation. The initial inspection, there was no  
2 fine involved, it was solely a warning that you've  
3 got to do this, this, and this to correct your  
4 situation. If you have not corrected it and we do  
5 issue a Notice of Violation, it will--you will get  
6 a--you will have to go before a tribunal and deal  
7 with them regarding the fine. One of the things  
8 that we don't want to do and is to basically  
9 penalize somebody who is trying to do something or  
10 do something correctly. You know, we want people  
11 to hire good exterminators, one of the things that  
12 we've done is we have had--well we're--we've  
13 completed one course where we talked--where we  
14 brought in 50 commercial exterminators into the  
15 Rodent Academy and put them through the Rodent  
16 Academy to teach them integrated pest management  
17 and best practices for rodent control. We've got  
18 another batch and they've got one more class to go  
19 to before they completed it. Our objective is  
20 eventually to bring all--or to have all of the  
21 commercial exterminators in the city go through  
22 our Rodent Academy or something similar to that to  
23 where they know the best practices and what needs  
24 to be done, where it's done on an integrated pest  
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2 management, where they're just not throwing bait  
3 out of a problem. Did I answer your question?

4

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COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Yes, yes,  
you did.

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EDGAR BUTTS: Thank you.

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COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: And actually  
some of those homeowners who were trying to abate  
the problem, but, unfortunately, they had to take  
a day off for work did go and they were able to  
get the violations dropped, but necessitated them  
taking a day off of work. One last question, Mr.  
Chair--

14

EDGAR BUTTS: Sure.

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COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: --on your--  
on the last page of your testimony, you say that  
through this pilot program in the Bronx, signs of  
rats fell by 30%--35%--

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EDGAR BUTTS: 35.

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COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: --from one  
inspection to the next which was a six-month  
interval. What--which seasons--was one--the first  
inspection was in the winter and the other one was  
in the summer or...?

25

EDGAR BUTTS: Yeah, it was and I'll

1  
2 tell you what we were concerned about when we were  
3 doing this and it really worked out where we  
4 believe this--the program is really going to be  
5 successful and is being successful, during the  
6 winter you expect less rat--less rats. We  
7 inspected--our first round was in the winter and  
8 our second round was in the summer, and you  
9 actually would expect an increase but what we got  
10 was a decrease, and so that is something that we  
11 believe is very real. We've not had enough  
12 experience yet to be able to completely  
13 differentiate between the seasons, Dr. Corrigan  
14 can probably better respond to the seasonality of  
15 rats, but we were pleased with the results and  
16 that's a big change and--are you going to talk  
17 about the map at all? That's up here?

18 [Off mic]

19 EDGAR BUTTS: Well but you can see  
20 the--on the left-hand--the map that's on this  
21 side, that was--that's Community Board 4 in the  
22 Bronx, that was inspections, then the red shows  
23 where rats were--you know, where there was an  
24 initial violation; the one on the right is the  
25 second round. So there is a drastic change in

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behavior of the citizens and of the number of rats that, you know, number of failure--failed violations So we think it's working well.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: That is very encouraging that they went down during the summer and I look forward to seeing this done citywide. I know in my district where I have the largest problems of rats, is where I have mostly all the restaurants and so the problem is exacerbated there as to other parts of my district where it's mostly residential.

EDGAR BUTTS: Yeah, where you have food, you're going to have--probably have rats and lots of them.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Okay. Thank you very much. And thank you, Mr. Chair.

EDGAR BUTTS: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Thank you very much, Rosie. I want to thank everybody for coming here. I do apologize, we were in a leadership meeting earlier, because our budget negotiating took a little bit longer. I did go over the testimony and I want to thank you for joining us. I just had a couple of questions on the Rodent

1  
2 Academy itself. You know, can you describe the  
3 curriculum at the Rodent Academy?

4           ROBERT CORRIGAN: Yes, Chair Rivera,  
5 my name is Bobby Corrigan, I'm the principal  
6 instructor with Rodent Academy, along with a team  
7 of dedicated health professionals, many that are  
8 here. The curriculum is--attempts to very  
9 specifically target, not only the rat, but the rat  
10 in New York City, which is important, you know,  
11 the rat in New York City has a particular  
12 infrastructure, it has a particular layout, five  
13 different boroughs, the density of New York is  
14 being what it is, very, very high. New York is  
15 very unique in that regard relative to the rats,  
16 so the economy, which was based on a CDC grant, we  
17 might add, that we submitted stating that New York  
18 is unique relative to rats, it suffers a little  
19 bit because of its uniqueness to rats. So the  
20 Academy is structured based on that particular  
21 model and so the Academy addresses New York City  
22 as its infrastructures, the different  
23 infrastructures, the parks, the subways, the  
24 sewers, the streets, the litter baskets, the whole  
25 picture because the rats do not discriminate, they

1  
2 cross over all the different infrastructures and  
3 it identifies the rats' behavior in this city. A  
4 part of the Academy is very specific to practical  
5 rodent control: what works and what does not.

6 There's many myths out there, I think everyone is  
7 aware that some people feel, you know, the rats  
8 are immune to the poisons, for example, of which  
9 they are not, but there's a pervasive thought that  
10 they might be because they would expect the rats  
11 to go away after a single baiting, for example.

12 So the academy addresses the complexity of rodent  
13 pest management in the testimony you just heard  
14 and there's a component to the academy also where  
15 on the third day, everyone goes out into the real  
16 world field, they spend a whole day in the real  
17 world field with assignments to analyze, inspect  
18 local rat infestations and to come back and--  
19 across agencies, we mix them up deliberately,  
20 different agencies are put together, so that we  
21 can have interagency thinking on how is the best  
22 approach to work together in putting together a  
23 pest management program for the area they went out  
24 in that day and it ends up being quite effective  
25 at the end of three days.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Oh, so it's a  
3 three-day course.

4 ROBERT CORRIGAN: Three days  
5 intensive, yes.

6 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Three day  
7 intense course. Now who takes part--how many  
8 people and who takes part in that training at the  
9 academy? Is--in terms of private-sector, public-  
10 sector, exterminators, things of that nature, how  
11 many people have actually taken part in it and who  
12 are these individuals?

13 ROBERT CORRIGAN: We have two types  
14 of academies now: first, is for the city agencies  
15 and over a thousand city agency personnel have  
16 gone through academy so far, which is kind of  
17 incredible. So over a thousand and representing  
18 most of the 19 agencies within the city and within  
19 some of those agencies, we've even separated out  
20 on full day intensives for their agencies. So in  
21 other words we might have, for example, Department  
22 of Sanitation would end up in an additional  
23 academy specific for another day on top of those  
24 three that just talks about rats and sanitation  
25 issues or parks, etc. So who attends is the

1  
2 agency personnel and they come from all different  
3 levels within the agency, everything from  
4 management to field personnel. And the second  
5 type of academy that's now--as Dr. Butts mentioned  
6 is very successful, is an academy that targets the  
7 pest management professionals that service the  
8 industry, and those are mostly made up of business  
9 managers and owners and the technicians that do  
10 the work of trying to get control of the rats in  
11 New York City for hire.

12 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: And how many  
13 people in that industry, in those industries take  
14 part in it?

15 ROBERT CORRIGAN: So far we've had  
16 our first-year launch, this was--2008 was our  
17 inaugural year and we keep the class to a maximum  
18 of 50 companies, so we can have effective teaching  
19 and it doesn't get so large that it becomes very  
20 impersonal and distant. So we close it at 50 and  
21 in both cases we had a waiting list and we had to  
22 go to a lottery system. So in both semesters, we  
23 call it the winter and the fall semester, it was  
24 50 and we just finished, right now we have one  
25 more day for this semester's academy. The waiting

1  
2 list continues and so we already filled up next  
3 year for 2009 of pest [off mic] professionals.

4 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: So is it one  
5 person per company or--'cause you said 50  
6 companies, so is it 50 individuals or is it more?

7 ROBERT CORRIGAN: We restrict it to  
8 two, no more than two per company, and most of its  
9 now is showing one person per company is showing  
10 up, but we don't allow any more than two.

11 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Okay. And that  
12 just ties into my next question, what is the cost  
13 to the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene per  
14 student for the academy?

15 ROBERT CORRIGAN: I'm not sure.

16 EDGAR BUTTS: We're--I cannot give  
17 you that answer and we'll have to get back to you  
18 on that.

19 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Okay. If you  
20 could just provided to our [crosstalk] over here.

21 EDGAR BUTTS: Yeah.

22 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Based on what  
23 the cost would be when we get that information,  
24 does--do you plan on, at any point in time,  
25 charging tuition, you know, for the course? You

1

2 know, the city's in a massive budget deficit and  
3 revenue is kind of tight, services are getting  
4 cut, so this is--may be a revenue generated for  
5 the city of New York, if it's something that's  
6 feasible and it's beneficial for the private  
7 sector since they [off mic] get fined, so do you  
8 plan on charging any tuition or fees for the  
9 course?

10

EDGAR BUTTS: We are looking into  
11 that, to date, we have not charged, we felt it was  
12 more important to get momentum, but it is being  
13 discussed it and the answer to your question is  
14 yes, but it's really important that we get the  
15 message out also.

16

CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Okay.

17

EDGAR BUTTS: So...

18

CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Good. All  
19 right. Thank you. I'm going to turn--ask my  
20 colleague Kendall Stewart to ask.

21

COUNCIL MEMBER STEWART: Thank you,  
22 Mr. Chair. Just to follow up on a couple of  
23 questions that you said that the costs to the  
24 academy, the three-day or four-day course, it's  
25 all free? Right now?

1  
2 EDGAR BUTTS: Right now it is, we do  
3 not plan on charging other city agencies--

4 COUNCIL MEMBER STEWART:

5 [Interposing] Well I'm talking about the  
6 commercial--

7 EDGAR BUTTS: [Interposing] The  
8 commercial, we are looking into charging them and-  
9 -but, to date, we have not charged them and,  
10 again, it's sometimes you've got to have a little  
11 momentum to get something to be successful and,  
12 you know, you kind of got to have a little carrot  
13 out for them to come and--but we are looking into  
14 that and, you know, what we will do is, we will  
15 get back to you on what we plan on [crosstalk]--

16 COUNCIL MEMBER STEWART:

17 [Interposing] Well and a follow up to that, is it  
18 mandatory that these commercial pest and rodent  
19 control folks take this course?

20 EDGAR BUTTS: No, it is not. They  
21 do have to pass a license, the commercial  
22 applicators have to pass a license with the New  
23 York State Department of Environmental  
24 Conservation and you have different categories.  
25 For example, people that do rodents, there's a

1  
2 category 7-A, which is structural, it's called  
3 structural and basically you learn about, you  
4 know, you learn about rats and how to control it  
5 within buildings. Personally, I have a category  
6 8, which is public health and it allows me to  
7 exterminate for rats also, but this is not  
8 required by the state to maintain their license,  
9 but they do get credits, the ones that do go get--  
10 including the city people, they do get credits or  
11 CEUs towards maintaining their license and...

12 COUNCIL MEMBER STEWART: Well, as I  
13 think about it, I know most professionals, in  
14 terms of maintaining their licenses, every three  
15 years they have to attend some kind of course  
16 getting credits. Why couldn't we make this one of  
17 the things that they--so that they would be up to  
18 date with the current things about pest control?  
19 Why couldn't we really try to make that part of  
20 the--

21 EDGAR BUTTS: The thought process is  
22 going very fast right now to do that, but, again,  
23 we wanted to get some momentum to have enough, you  
24 know, to get interest within the community--the  
25 commercial community is definitely interested and

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we will--you know, it's on our agenda and we're trying--we're going to try very hard to make that a--to charge a reasonable and fair fee to at least cover our cost.

5

6

COUNCIL MEMBER STEWART: All right.

7

The other questions that I have, some time ago, about a year or two ago, we had discussions on a auto part facilities, talking about these big lots that you have a lot of junk yard and stuff. What program do we have right now dealing with those places as far as controlling rats are concerned?

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EDGAR BUTTS: We do not target them

14

per se, we deal in the area where we're doing the Bronx Initiative. Those areas are inspected as part of the initiative and the rest of the city, we deal with those on a complaint basis.

15

16

17

18

COUNCIL MEMBER STEWART: Yeah, I

19

know we went through a lot of issues with that, but I thought that, you know, there would've been some sort of a program or where by these facilities will follow because people who live a block away or in the next--just adjacent to these places they have real problem because if those facilities are not taking care of and the pests,

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it then goes over to the private owners around there. So I thought you would have some sort of a program mandating that they have a program to follow as they do business.

DAN KASS: Well let me just ask for a point of clarification, are you referring to lots that have junk piled on them, or are you referring to a commercial endeavor that deals with waste and junk?

COUNCIL MEMBER STEWART: Well, yeah, well not only waste and junk, we're talking about place that sell car parts--

DAN KASS: Yeah.

COUNCIL MEMBER STEWART: --used car parts, their big lots and they, you know, and the public don't really get in between there, but--

DAN KASS: Right.

COUNCIL MEMBER STEWART: --the fact is it's a really a haven for rats--

DAN KASS: Right. [Crosstalk]

COUNCIL MEMBER STEWART: --and next door, anybody who live next door, they go through the problem of dealing with these rats.

DAN KASS: Yeah, let me just say a

1  
2 couple quick things, one is that, I mean, it's  
3 exactly that circumstance that informs the whole  
4 nature of the Bronx Initiatives, it's the idea  
5 that, you know, if somebody complains about rats  
6 on a particular property, that may not be the  
7 junkyard, let's take that example--

8 COUNCIL MEMBER STEWART: Right.

9 DAN KASS: --and we find rats, you  
10 know, historically and traditionally because of  
11 limited resources elsewhere, we sort of stick with  
12 that property, we might look at one or two  
13 adjacent to it. In the Bronx, the idea is to  
14 recognize that the rats on one property may be  
15 actually a consequence of problems elsewhere, and  
16 so we are doing that where we've had the resources  
17 to do it and so you'll find throughout this area  
18 of the Bronx that we don't sort of limit ourselves  
19 to places with known problems, we look  
20 affirmatively for them. They're subject to the  
21 same rules as everyone else, so if we find any  
22 active signs of rats on their property, they're  
23 now required to initiate a comprehensive program  
24 that includes very detailed advice and mandates  
25 for thorough inspections, engaging the services of

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2 a pest control professional, developing a pest  
3 management plan, and they have to do it quickly  
4 because otherwise we'll be back. So, in addition,  
5 we have a comprehensive program at least, again in  
6 this area of the Bronx where we've had this  
7 enhanced program where we'll go back repeatedly to  
8 that property if the owner doesn't and we'll  
9 abate, and we'll do it over and over again until  
10 the problem is improved and we're going to charge  
11 them for those services.

12

COUNCIL MEMBER STEWART: On a  
13 similar matter, we have a number of folks who live  
14 right above the subway and you know the subway,  
15 it's a haven for rats. I think you know that,  
16 right? Now I have had several complaints from  
17 folks, homeowners, who would say, well they've  
18 been cited for violation of rats, they close all  
19 the holes, but the rats tend to come back because  
20 they're right over the subway. And I want to know  
21 if you're coordinating the efforts as to [off mic]  
22 as with the--that which is being done with folks  
23 in the subway?

24

ROBERT CORRIGAN: I'll respond to  
25 that--Bobby Corrigan. First, to clear up a little

1  
2 bit of a misconception with rodents as an animal  
3 and their preference for different habitats and,  
4 even though the subways--and I, myself, believed  
5 this for many years, they are dug tunnels, they  
6 disappear into the darkness, people litter onto  
7 the tracks, and we all see rats periodically on  
8 the tracks--but the subway environment,  
9 interestingly enough, is not a major haven for  
10 rats. It's a periodical use by the rats,  
11 especially during the winter where they can escape  
12 the cold, frozen ground up above, and they'll drop  
13 down and visit the subway on an intermittent type  
14 of level, but because it's dark down by the track  
15 area, the rat itself, not having great eyesight,  
16 forges out readily, where they don't do that as  
17 readily except for nighttime, of course, at the  
18 surface. So sometimes we have the perception that  
19 the subways are in fact part of a big, big  
20 population of rats, when in fact, the subways are  
21 one of the lesser environments for rat  
22 populations. We are, however, working with MTA on  
23 a new particular initiative on a pilot program  
24 here also where MTA proactively asked are we doing  
25 everything possible on a progressive rat control

1  
2 program and so the Department of Health is  
3 offering technical assistance along those lines  
4 for MTA on a proactive progressive program. The  
5 program they have in place right now is very good,  
6 I might comment, it's very good, and if it wasn't  
7 for their program, we might see a lot more rats.  
8 But we are currently analyzing what other avenues,  
9 what more progressive, if there are, avenues can  
10 we offer MTA for the subway rat situation. So  
11 it's [crosstalk]--

12 COUNCIL MEMBER STEWART:

13 [Interposing] I wasn't specifically talking about  
14 the tracks, I'm talking about the ventilation  
15 areas whereby all different stuff is being--may  
16 drop and get down into those vents and right next  
17 to someone's home. They may treat the holes and  
18 the, what it is they can reach above ground, but  
19 I'm saying there's a number of rats, mice, you  
20 know, rodents, that well after finish treating for  
21 a while, they tend to come back as if nothing has  
22 happened. And I'm not talking about along the  
23 tracks, I'm just talking about those vents, like  
24 the places like along Nostrand Avenue in Brooklyn  
25 whereby folks are complaining that they get

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2 citations for the fact that they--there might be  
3 holes or droppings and they treat them, they close  
4 them up, and all of that, and then a month later,  
5 they come back, because they're right over the  
6 vents. So that's what I'm asking about, and it's  
7 not a place that people frequent or you clean out  
8 every so often, these are just vents, they have  
9 whole places that the rodents can come up when  
10 they want and you're not--we're not treating those  
11 areas. So that's what I'm talking about and you  
12 have a number of these folks are complaining about  
13 the fact that because of the subway vents and in  
14 those areas they get problems as far as rodents  
15 are concerned.

16 ROBERT CORRIGAN: Yeah, the aeration  
17 vents and the fire escape vents and the types of  
18 areas leading directly down to the subway, because  
19 there is quote a hole in the ground, sometimes the  
20 rats will be seen emerging from any particular  
21 hole in the ground, but the vents themselves,  
22 Councilman, every once in a while a rat will be  
23 seen coming and going from those, but our  
24 investigations, and we've done a lot of  
25 inspections on those particular vents to see if

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2 they end up harboring large populations of rats,  
3 and, again, they turn out to be more of an  
4 intermittent type of thing than they are any kind  
5 of an established rats. But the lay public, if  
6 they do see a rat coming out of a vent or a catch  
7 basin, many times will feel, well that's the  
8 source. And we have other areas where we look  
9 that end up being sources, but we don't think the  
10 vents play a major role, they do play a role and  
11 it may vary from neighborhood to neighborhood, and  
12 especially if some garbage gets clogged in a  
13 particular vent and the rats find that clogged  
14 garbage, that vent could be an issue, and the  
15 residents of that block may have repeated calls to  
16 311 on a vent, but it's more of a specific thing  
17 as a generalize for the city thing.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER STEWART: All right.  
19 Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

20 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Thank you very  
21 much. Next we have Council Member Inez Dickens.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Thank you,  
23 Mr. Chair, and thank you for your testimony,  
24 Commissioner. Now on page three of your  
25 testimony, I see where you say that there is over

1  
2 1,000 city agency employees that have been trained  
3 by New York City Rodent Academy. Does--and you  
4 also spoke that 19 city agencies have  
5 participated, does that include NYCHA?

6 EDGAR BUTTS: Yes, ma'am, it does.  
7 NYCHA is part of the Rodent Task Force. NYCHA--  
8 Bobby, do you have any idea how many--what total  
9 number--it's been a lot of people from NYCHA.

10 ROBERT CORRIGAN: Yes, we've had  
11 about 70 people come through on NYCHA and we had  
12 NYCHA-specific Rodent Academy just for NYCHA, in  
13 fact, several times.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: And is that  
15 for all NYCHA developments or for specific  
16 boroughs, what...?

17 ROBERT CORRIGAN: It was for the  
18 staff involved in the pest control programs within  
19 NYCHA and--

20 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS:  
21 [Interposing] Does NYCHA have a specific--have  
22 employees that are just do pest control or is this  
23 part of maintenance or what?

24 ROBERT CORRIGAN: Yes, NYCHA has  
25 their own pest control staff.

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COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: And they're trained--all of them are trained by you?

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ROBERT CORRIGAN: The Rodent Academy offers additional training to what NYCHA already has in-house, which is pretty extensive from what I understand.

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COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: And you do inspections though in the private sector? You do inspections of NYCHA developments also?

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ROBERT CORRIGAN: No, not really, they do their own.

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DAN KASS: There--in general, when a complaint comes in through 311 about another-- about a property on--the owned by another city agency, they direct that complaint directly to the agency. In the case of the Bronx where we're doing these proactive inspections, we have been going to NYCHA facilities to look at conditions.

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COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: When a complaint comes in on the 311 line and it is about a project that is owned by NYCHA or another city agency and you do the referral, do you follow up to see what was done?

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DAN KASS: We don't technically do

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1  
2 the referral, 311 makes the referral directly to  
3 the agency. We do hear about many of the more  
4 vexing problems though through the Rodent Task  
5 Force. So, in that case, the Department will play  
6 a technical assistance role for addressing a  
7 problem, but, for the most part, the agencies are  
8 expected to manage it directly.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: And so  
10 would you consider doing inspections to ensure the  
11 protection of the residents in NYCHA developments?

12 DAN KASS: What we've found in the  
13 pilot program in the Bronx is that we don't--we  
14 designed it in such a way that we don't  
15 distinguish public from private property there.  
16 So, without regard to ownership, we will  
17 affirmatively inspect every property twice a year  
18 and in those instances we have made many, many  
19 referrals to, not just NYCHA, but other city  
20 agencies for signs of rats on their properties,  
21 and we've adopted a proactive notification program  
22 where they get the same letters that a private  
23 property owner get when we find rats on their  
24 property, and every two weeks we send them a  
25 summary report of all of the properties that we do

1

2 know with a request for an update on what they--  
3 what steps they've taken to correct the problem.

4

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Now this is  
5 in the pilot program in the Bronx.

6

DAN KASS: Correct.

7

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Excellent.  
8 Now do you follow up by giving violations and  
9 summonses?

10

DAN KASS: We follow up by giving  
11 notices, we do not fine other city agencies and we  
12 will--we've just implemented a program where we're  
13 going to be doing subsequent inspections to find  
14 out if they've corrected the conditions.

15

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: So what  
16 recourse is there and what protection do the  
17 residents of a NYCHA development, or a development  
18 that is owned by another city agency, have as far  
19 as protection where you have found rodent  
20 infestation and you've just issued letters and  
21 reports? What protection is there for those  
22 residents?

23

DAN KASS: The--our expectation is  
24 that the--you know, even though we think the  
25 private landlords may be motivated by the desire

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2 to reduce fines and be billed by the Department,  
3 the motivations may still be similar for other  
4 city agencies. NYCHA pays their own staff to  
5 exterminate their properties, you know, they're  
6 subject to, you know, public notification as well  
7 with the new Rat Information Portal, so there are  
8 opportunities for people to recognize publicly  
9 that there are problems on city-owned properties.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: All right.  
11 But really, there is no motivation for city-owned  
12 properties to do what has to be done--and the  
13 reason I'm questioning so, because several of my  
14 developments in my community do have rodent  
15 problems, so I'm asking--and I don't want a site  
16 which ones publicly here, but I'm willing to  
17 discuss it with you--and I'm not in the Bronx.

18 DAN KASS: Right. You know, I think  
19 that for specific developments, I think talking to  
20 NYCHA is probably a better idea than our being  
21 able to respond on their behalf. The Rodent Task  
22 Force will take referrals for specific properties  
23 and that usually involves a coordinated city  
24 effort.

25 EDGAR BUTTS: The Rodent Task Force

1  
2 generally gets involved where multiple agencies  
3 are involved in the--you know, we need to bring  
4 multiple agencies together to effect a good  
5 control situation and there may be where we bring  
6 four--you know, where NYCHA comes, and MTA comes,  
7 and the Department of Education comes 'cause  
8 there's a school right next door, and so on and so  
9 forth and we're there--the Department of Health is  
10 there also.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: And I guess  
12 the same applies for DCAS, is that correct?

13 [Off mic]

14 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: All right.  
15 Thank you so much and thank you for your  
16 testimony.

17 EDGAR BUTTS: Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Thank you very  
19 much. Was there any more questions?

20 FEMALE VOICE: No.

21 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: No? Gentlemen,  
22 thank you very much.

23 EDGAR BUTTS: Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Next, we have  
25 with us Rockaways Tiger, Paul Schubert.

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PAUL SCHUBERT: Yes, sir.

CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Thank you. Do we have any written testimony, you can provide it to the Sergeant of Arms and the Sergeant of Arms will give it to us, and you can just take a chair, state your name and affiliation for the record, and proceed with your testimony. Thank you.

[Off mic]

CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: You can proceed.

[Pause]

[Off mic]

PAUL SCHUBERT: Yes, Councilman Rivera? [Off mic] It's on? Yeah, okay. Councilman Dickens, okay, anyway, I can address this to you as well. I'm a believer for some problems we do have some state laws concerning when a state employee or a city employee, a government employee, does not do their job, criminal penalties can be imposed. My own favorite for private companies is Article 15, Penal Code Criminal Liability laws, it's one year in jail, I would like to see that increased. I believe it can be--if it can be proven that a

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2 NYCHA employee had it within their power to  
3 correct a rodent problem and failed to do so and  
4 this could be proven to the satisfaction of  
5 Council, then Council would then take this  
6 information, videotapes, testimony, witnessing, to  
7 DOI and Council can also provide the state laws  
8 concerning conspiracy, concerning Article 15 of  
9 the New York State Penal Code Criminal Liability  
10 laws, and prosecute this NYCHA employee to the  
11 fullest extent of the law. I believe all we need  
12 to do is take one or two of these lazy people and  
13 make an example of them on the front page of the  
14 news, and possibly even New York One, my own  
15 favorite channel. This would send a message to  
16 all the other NYCHA employees, you are hired by  
17 taxpayer dollars, you pay your bills with taxpayer  
18 dollars, and if you want to be lazy, thou can be  
19 housed at taxpayer expense in a controlled  
20 situation, I understand is the vernacular as such.  
21 I don't believe in lawsuits against NYCHA because  
22 that's our tax money being spent. I do believe in  
23 handing their ass over to the city--over to  
24 District Attorney though, but that's my own  
25 believe. Now, I came here for another problem,

1  
2 one that has been concealed by the DEC, by  
3 KeySpan, National Grid, and Con Ed. Within there  
4 you'll see a map, the map, it's not in color, I'm  
5 sorry, I didn't--I had to go to library and they  
6 don't print in color and my printer is broken, so  
7 I couldn't give you a color picture, but here's  
8 how it is. In Manhattan and the Bronx,  
9 Consolidated Edison has 50 manufactured gas plants  
10 all along the shore. These are migrating over  
11 four pages of chemicals that cause cancer into the  
12 water as we speak, and the soil. There are  
13 housing projects built next to these things.  
14 These cancer-causing chemicals can be ingested by  
15 the air, you can breath them in, every time you  
16 think it smells bad, this is not the sewer, this  
17 is not the sewer, sewer smells like dog droppings.  
18 This is a different odor. You're breathing in  
19 cancer. Now we do have a system called  
20 bioremediation, there's a couple ways to do it.  
21 One way, bioremediation basically is saturating  
22 the soil with microbes which then eat and digest  
23 any kind of petroleum waste--gasoline and oil  
24 whatever. DEC state is telling us that we can't  
25 use it on a multi-acre site, I've spoken to the

1  
2 companies, they tell me if it's 100 square feet or  
3 10,000 square feet, they don't care, it just cost  
4 more money. System takes about three to five  
5 years, depending upon what technique you use, but  
6 it's basically, you pump in oxidizers, bacteria,  
7 and by the time they get through having their fun,  
8 there is no traceable amounts of toxic waste. We  
9 are, according to the Queens Health--Queens  
10 Library Health Link, we are the number one cancer-  
11 ridden city in the continental United States. You  
12 give me 40 manufactured gas plants, there's 23 in  
13 Brooklyn alone, 40 in the Queens and Long Island,  
14 there's around 50 in the Bronx and Manhattan,  
15 Staten Island has one--tell Mike McMahon he only  
16 has one, okay? And the other--and Oddo--tell Mr.  
17 Oddo, he only has one, but everyone else has been  
18 cursed with numerous ones of these. Now, I  
19 believe that with that being it's everybody's  
20 problem from the Bronx to Rockaways, together we  
21 can force KeySpan to clean them up. Now what do  
22 we do with the property after it's clean? That's  
23 a reasonable presumption. Well we need housing,  
24 we need schools, we need, you know, different--I  
25 mean, we can take these properties and now use

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2 them for public good, maybe some waterfront parks,  
3 you know--those are details. But I know that this  
4 Council is going to spread the word and we're  
5 going to let KeySpan, National Grid, Con Ed--  
6 including there's gasoline stations where gasoline  
7 leaks into the soil, they use bioremediation, they  
8 use it at dry cleaner plants, which they--that  
9 they have chemicals leak into the soil.

10 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Mr. Schubert,  
11 if I can--

12 PAUL SCHUBERT: Yes.

13 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: --and I  
14 appreciate your testimony, but I'm just trying to  
15 find a correlation with rats.

16 PAUL SCHUBERT: Okay. Well,  
17 pollution is pollution, rats is pollution on four  
18 legs. Now I would also like to see the law  
19 changed in New York City that if you can have--if  
20 people can have pet ferrets, a ferret is a  
21 natural, organic, biological control system for  
22 rats. The way the law states now in New York  
23 State--I looked this up when I was a young man--if  
24 you use a ferret for extermination purposes, you  
25 can have it, but if you have it as a pet, you can

1  
2 be fined. Now if we can have more ferrets as pets  
3 in New York City, especially in the lower economic  
4 areas, ferrets are very intelligent, they can live  
5 on dog and cat food, they make great pets and you  
6 put me a ferret in an apartment, the rat's smell  
7 it, they will run for their lives, and they should  
8 because if the ferret gets in the wall, he will  
9 drag out Mommy and Daddy and he will eat the  
10 babies. Ferrets have been used in the time of  
11 George Washington. Exterminator would go up to  
12 your town house, he would--the ferrets would drag  
13 out the rats, the mice, he'd line them up, he'd  
14 charge you so much a mouse, so much for a rat, and  
15 he'd come back next month and do it over again.  
16 And ferrets have been used as a biological organic  
17 control for rodents since the time of the Romans.  
18 And if you have a ferret--if you have the rat  
19 smell a ferret in the apartment house, the rats  
20 will only do one thing--they will run for their  
21 very lives, they will vacate, they will go across  
22 the street, they will get out of Dodge, they will,  
23 you know, take their chances in the sewers, but  
24 they want no part of a ferret and you can, you  
25 know, ask anyone. And I believe, you know,

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2 basically, I always felt if we could take ferret  
3 musk and we could make it into some kind of an  
4 incense or something, and just the smell of the  
5 ferret musk and they would run like hell. But  
6 that's me.

7

[Pause]

8

[Off mic]

9

10 PAUL SCHUBERT: I've been thinking  
11 about it actually, if I could patent it, I would  
12 go to IFF, International Fragrance [off mic] and  
13 say, can you make me some ferret perfume, ferret  
14 fragrance, I know I can sell it. You know, they'd  
15 analyze what particular part--what hormone causes  
16 the fear reaction and the rats don't have a  
17 choice, it's instinctual. You think snakes are  
18 not afraid of mongooses, but rats are--Rosie can  
19 tell you this--rats are in deadly abject fear of,  
20 you know. [Pause]

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22

CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: I think that is  
actually a great idea and actually because of  
there's no patent laws--

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PAUL SCHUBERT: Yeah.

24

25

CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: --required for  
perfumes and colognes, you should actually develop

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2 one and we can put it on cats and dogs and  
3 hopefully they'll scare away the mice and rats.

4 PAUL SCHUBERT: Yeah.

5 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Not a bad idea.

6 PAUL SCHUBERT: You know, but I do  
7 believe is manufactured gas plant, the time has  
8 come that we get rid of them and I want to do them  
9 all at one time, it's just a matter of money, and  
10 it's their money anyway. And, Ms. Dickens? Have  
11 your counsel look up those laws on liability when  
12 civil servants don't do their jobs. Handcuffs is  
13 a great encouragement. There's going to be a  
14 couple--we just make a--we just take a couple and  
15 make it, you know, supervisors, make examples of  
16 them, managers of housing, whatever, we start from  
17 the top on down and if they're marched in  
18 handcuffs on New York One, trust me, as sure as  
19 you're wearing blue, I'm wearing blue, the message  
20 will be sent.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Thank you,  
22 thank you so much for--thank you for that  
23 suggestion.

24 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Mr. Schubert,  
25 thank you very much for your testimony, I think

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it's a great idea. Thank you very much.

PAUL SCHUBERT: I believe in handcuffs sometimes.

CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: That doesn't sound bad.

PAUL SCHUBERT: Rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief--everyone's afraid of sheriff.

CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Exactly. Seeing no one else prepared to speak on today's hearing, I'm going to call this hearing to an adjournment. Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen, and I appreciate your time here today.

[Off mic]

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Tammy Wittman, certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.

Signature Tammy Wittman

Date December 18, 2008