

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

JOINT COMMITTEES ON HEALTH, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND
SANITATION & SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

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February 24, 2009
Start: 1:39pm
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HELD AT: Council Chambers
City Hall

B E F O R E:

LEROY G. COMRIE, JR.
Chairperson

Joel Rivera, Chair, Health

Robert Jackson, Acting Chair,
Sanitation

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Christine Quinn, Speaker
Maria del Carmen Arroyo
Charles Barron
Gale A. Brewer

A P P E A R A N C E S

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Inez E. Dickens
Helen D. Foster
James F. Gennaro
G. Oliver Koppell
Jessica S. Lappin
John C. Liu
Melissa Mark-Viverito
Darlene Mealy
Helen Sears
Kendall Stewart
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A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Dr. Edgar Butts
Assistant Commissioner for Veterinary and Pest
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Barbara Flynn
Chief of Staff of Intergovernmental Affairs
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A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

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Courtney Taray

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Enid Farber

Diana Foster

Christine Carol spk

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

Ingrid Bockner

Cesar Soto

Freedom Pest Canine Unit

CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: Good

afternoon. My name is Leroy Comrie. I'm the Chair of the Committee on Consumer Affairs. Today we'll be holding our second hearing on the Intro bill 57, a local law to amend the administrative code of the City of New York in relation to the sale of reconditioned mattresses and the creation of a bed bug task force.

We will also hear Resolution 1414 for the first time, which calls on the New York State Department of State to promulgate standards and rules concerning the sanitation of mattresses that include requirements sufficient to eradicate bed bugs in reconditioned mattresses before their sale.

Before we continue I'd like to acknowledge my co-chairs, Council Member Joel Rivera, who chairs the Committee on Health and Council Member Robert Jackson, who is serving today as the acting chair on the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management and of course our Speaker Quinn who is with us this afternoon.

Bed bug is the common name given to

1 a parasite that preys on its victims during the
2 night by piercing the skin as they sleep.

3 Although bed bugs are not generally known as human
4 disease carriers, their bites results in welts
5 that become irritated and enflamed. Because bed
6 bugs are wingless these insects generally
7 proliferate by attaching themselves to clothing,
8 luggage, furniture and bedding.

9
10 In the early stages of an
11 infestation, bed bugs are found in the seams and
12 the folds of mattresses and bed covers but they
13 quickly spread to the cracks and crevices in bed
14 frames. Although bed bugs were widely
15 exterminated in the United States after World War
16 II, pest control experts report a resurgence in
17 bed bug related complaints, particularly in
18 buildings with high occupancy turnover. These
19 insects are reportedly immune to standard
20 pesticides and are extremely difficult to
21 eliminate.

22 If just one bed bug survives a
23 fumigation, the area can quickly become reinvested
24 as an adult female can lay up to five eggs per day
25 and each egg takes as little as 17 days to hatch.

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2 To help combat this disturbing trend, Intro 57
3 introduced by Council Member Gale Brewer would
4 prohibit the sale of reconditioned mattresses as
5 well as create a task force to study bed bug
6 related health concerns. After completing its
7 study, the task force would be charged with making
8 recommendations to eradicate the bed bug problem.

9 There is a great deal of
10 uncertainty regarding standards for sanitizing
11 second hand mattresses. At the first hearing on
12 Intro 57 in 2006, the Department of Consumer
13 Affairs reported that although the state law
14 requiring registration for sellers of used bedding
15 was enacted over a decade ago, the rules regarding
16 sanitary standards still have not been
17 promulgated. Since that hearing Council Member
18 Gale Brewer introduced Resolution 1414, which
19 calls upon the state directed by this problem.

20 Before we hear from the witnesses,
21 we'll hear from majority leader Joel Rivera,
22 Speaker Quinn and Council Member Jackson, not
23 necessarily in that order.

24 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Thank you very
25 much. Good afternoon, my name is Joel Rivera.

2 I'm the Chair of the Health Committee here in the
3 City Council. I want to thank my co-chairs for
4 holding this hearing on this important quality of
5 life issue. Council Member Leroy Comrie from
6 Queens, who we just heard from is the Chair of the
7 Consumer Affairs Committee, Council Member Robert
8 Jackson, the acting Chair of the Sanitation
9 Committee will be giving his opening statement in
10 a few as well as our speaker, Christine Quinn and
11 Gale Brewer is one of the prime sponsors for the
12 legislation.

13 We're here today to discuss four
14 piece of legislation, Intro 57, Intro 872, Intro
15 873-A and Reso 1414. I will be discussing Intro
16 873-A specifically. This legislation would fill a
17 necessary void in the city's response to combating
18 bed bugs. It is very difficult to exterminate
19 this parasite since they can go long periods
20 without feeding and can carefully conceal itself
21 in cracks and crevices, even in furniture. Also
22 as Chair Comrie noted, changes in pesticide usage
23 has contributed to a rise in bed bugs.

24 In New York City we have seen an
25 exponential increase in bed bug complaints.

1
2 Therefore there is a clear need to offer tenants,
3 building owners and exterminators a valuable
4 educational resource to assist them with this
5 issue. Intro 873-A, sponsored by Council Member
6 Gale Brewer, would require the Department of
7 Health and Mental Hygiene to establish training
8 programs on techniques for eliminating bed bugs.
9 There would be one program for exterminators and
10 another program for property owners.

11 These programs would aim to help
12 improve the ability of both groups to get rid of
13 infestations and prevent its spread. Both
14 programs would include information on identifying
15 bed bugs, their life cycle, inspection, procedures
16 to identify infestations, techniques to prepare
17 insecticides for extermination and various other
18 methods to eliminate the proliferation of bed
19 bugs.

20 The training program would also
21 need to include information on what not to do when
22 attempting to rid a property of bed bugs and would
23 specifically cover what pesticides are not
24 effective. To help the public identify
25 exterminators who are trained to handle bed bugs,

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2 exterminators that participate in the Department's
3 training program would have their names placed on
4 a list that would be accessible to members of the
5 public through 3-1-1 and the Department's web
6 site. Finally, Intro 873-A would also require the
7 Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to make
8 other types of information on bed bugs available
9 to the public on their web site and through 3-1-1.

10 I would like to thank the staff of
11 my committee for their hard work. And I want to
12 recognize my colleagues from the Health Committee
13 who are here with us today. I also want to ask
14 our acting Chair, Council Member Jackson, to give
15 his opening statements first.

16 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank
17 you and good afternoon. As my co-chair indicated,
18 my name is Robert Jackson and I'm the acting Chair
19 of the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste
20 Management. I'd like to begin by thanking Council
21 Members Comrie and Rivera for holding today's
22 joining hearing on this important topic. I'm so
23 happy to see our leader, the Speaker Christine
24 Quinn, here along with the prime sponsor, Gale
25 Brewer.

As many of us, unfortunately, know bed bugs present an alarming threat that is rapidly spreading throughout this city impacting people from all walks of life and virtually every neighborhood of the five boroughs, whether you're rich or poor. Many of us here today have heard the alarming facts and anecdotes about bed bugs, tiny blood sucking pests that come out at night while we sleep, which borough is hard to find crevices around our apartments and are extremely hard to get rid of, even with the aid of exterminators. Such stories and statistics can instill fear in anyone.

Perhaps more disturbing, the bed bug problem has grown throughout the city at an alarming rate over the last five years. The Department of Housing and Preservation and Development, commonly known as HPD, reports that bed bug complaints increased from just 192 complaints in 2004 to more than 9,000 complaints in 2008, almost 50 times more complaints in just four years before.

Once bed bugs infest a home or apartment, the toll they take on victims can be

1
2 dramatic, a factor which many of our witnesses
3 today can attest. And I personally can attest to
4 that. As a young child growing up in New York
5 City we had bed bugs in my house. They bit the
6 mmm out of me and that's the truth - no joke. The
7 psychological trauma often grew off of physical
8 harm. Many victims experience an inability to
9 sleep, incessant discomfort, paranoia about being
10 in one's home and overwhelming stress. You know
11 when someone said they have bed bugs, you move
12 away. And you don't visit their homes.

13 Bed bugs can also impose an
14 enormous economic burden on their victims. The
15 cost for exterminators are often onerous and many
16 times successful treatment requires repeated
17 visits by exterminators. In addition, because bed
18 bugs tend to burrow and lay eggs in a variety of
19 different places, as you know behind picture
20 frames, mattresses, bed frames, dresser drawers,
21 in the couch, underneath the rugs, so many
22 different places. Their victims often have to
23 throw away many of their personal belongings,
24 including mattresses, furniture and even clothing
25 to ensure they rid themselves of the pests. Even

with all of that, they may not be gone.

As we will hear more about it today, there is simply no safe and certain method to exterminate bed bugs. Despite their best efforts, exterminators often need multiple visits to properly treat bed bugs and many times, even that is not enough. These bugs can remain in the walls or survive in adjacent apartments and can even return once the treatment stops.

As the problem continues to spread throughout our city, bed bugs are being reported in more and more public places, cropping up in schools, hospitals, work places and even in our subway stations. I've had the personal experience to see them, within the past two years, in public places. As these pests appear in more public places, the risk of spreading grows greater.

As a facts and anecdotes clearly illustrate, bed bugs present our city with an alarming problem. Our objective with these three bills we are discussing today is to enact legislation that one, limits the spread of bed bugs throughout this city, two, improve the techniques employed to exterminate these pests and

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2 three, provide New York bed bug victims with
3 information and resources to deal with the problem
4 quickly and effectively.

5 With these goals in mind, I'm
6 looking forward to hearing from our wide array of
7 guests who I hope will enrich our collective
8 understanding of the problems and guide us towards
9 effective solutions. Specifically, as the acting
10 Chair of the Sanitation Committee I would like to
11 gather information to better understand it and how
12 sanitation practices can be modified to curtail
13 the spread o bed bugs. Ultimately, I hope the
14 work we do here today and continue to do moving
15 forward will assist the City Council in drafting
16 meaningful and effective legislation, which helps
17 to put an end to the spread of these worrisome
18 pests.

19 I have in here a package of bed
20 bugs live - no I'm joking. I'm joking. Now
21 without any further a due I'd like to turn over to
22 my colleague, Council Member Gale Brewer for a few
23 remarks. Council Member Gale Brewer.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you
25 very much. I want to thank my colleagues,

1
2 certainly the Speaker and the administration. I
3 think the purpose of today's hearing is certainly
4 to listen to the discussion about the bills from
5 the administration and also to tell the public
6 that there is a need for education. When we have
7 education and we know what to do, then we will be
8 able in our apartments, in the hospitals, or the
9 police stations or as the list that Council Member
10 Jackson listed, will be able to deal with the
11 situation.

12 I want to thank, certainly, the
13 advocates, Renee Corea in particular with her
14 amazing List Serve, Lou Sorokin and all the
15 exterminators, those who are using sprays, those
16 who are using dogs and those who are just willing
17 to discuss this topic.

18 The 3-1-1 calls, just to give you
19 an example of what was mentioned earlier, in 2006
20 there were 11,000 calls, in 2007 over 15,000 calls
21 and in 2008 over 22,000 calls. That's only to 3-
22 1-1, that does not include the calls directly to
23 the Housing Authority's Maintenance and Repair
24 Hotline and to exterminators or just to your
25 management.

1
2 I think that this is an issue that,
3 because we fortunately don't have DDT again,
4 because we travel a lot, our apartments are warm,
5 and we're very interested in internet, cable and
6 telephone and the bed bugs move between us. In
7 New York City, we live above, we live below, we
8 live next door. We're very efficient in terms of
9 where we live but that's not good for getting rid
10 of bed bugs.

11 I've always said that this is not
12 necessarily a physical health issues and the
13 doctors could agree or disagree. But it is a
14 major mental health issue. I am delighted that
15 the Department of Health, I think, is definitely
16 understanding that. We've had had some agency
17 meetings, we need more coordination. We've had
18 had wonderful education forums sponsored by
19 Housing Preservation and Development, hundreds and
20 hundreds of people showed up. We've had the
21 previous hearing, as you heard. The Department of
22 Health has done a sheet on the web listing what
23 the education and how one can get rid of them,
24 being specific. I think we would all agree we
25 need more. I know Toronto has more, that's a good

1
2 opportunity.

3 I think one of the reasons that the
4 3-1-1 calls have increased is to the credit of Do
5 It and the 3-1-1 system, it now lists specifically
6 bed bugs and not just pests, which is how it was
7 listed before. We also worked with the Department
8 of Education because unfortunately some of the
9 schools have bed bugs. When you're a parent--I
10 know I took the lice out of my kid's hair but the
11 issue with the bed bugs is more challenging. We
12 need to get rid of the stigma. We need to talk to
13 our neighbors, we need to talk to management. If
14 there's a problem in our building, we need to deal
15 with it and not be afraid. I think that's where
16 education comes in.

17 We may not be able to get rid of
18 them but we can certainly work to educate each
19 other. In Boston, I don't know that this is going
20 to work here but there's a sticker that says this
21 is how Boston puts out its mattresses. I would
22 say that anybody who has got stock in Bed Bath &
23 Beyond or any other store, they're selling out on
24 different things to put on your mattress. Is that
25 right? Is that wrong? These are the things that

1 we will learn today.

2
3 I also am very concerned about the
4 wonderful workers in the City of New York who go
5 out to deal with people who are hoarders or who
6 need help in terms of managing their own affairs.
7 The adult protective service workers, I think,
8 need to have education as to how to deal with bed
9 bugs. I think the courts, it's not a landlord
10 problem, it's not a tenant problem. The question
11 is how do you address it, it's nobody's fault that
12 you have bed bugs in your house.

13 I think just to finalize, to say
14 the issue for us and again, it's much thanks to
15 people in this room, that there are ways in which
16 we can educate ourselves. I think that Ray Lopez
17 in East Harlem is doing a great job with families
18 who can not throw out any of their furniture
19 because they can't afford to get more furniture.
20 The question is how do you keep your furniture and
21 at the same time get rid of the bed bugs.

22 There are answers to all of these
23 questions. That's what we're here today, to
24 figure out legislatively how we can promote these
25 answers, promote education and say to government,

we're here to help you if you have bed bugs.

Thank you very much and thank you Madam Speaker.

CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: At this point in time we're going to start off the--Madam Speaker.

SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you very much. I want to start off by thanking Chairpersons Rivera and Comrie and acting Chair of the Sanitation Committee Robert Jackson for holding this important hearing today. The fact that we have three committees looking at this issue today I think sends a clear message about how complicated eradicating bed bugs can be and why we really need a high level of government coordination.

I want to start by really in addition to thanking the Chairs, underscoring mine and I think my colleagues thanks to Council Member Gale Brewer, somebody who has been raising this issue for quite some time.

[Applause]

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Robert shush, Robert.

SPEAKER QUINN: She's a little bit

1
2 dubbed the Bed Bug Lady as Council Member Foster
3 just said. We mean that lovingly. I want to
4 thank Gale for focusing all of us on this issue
5 and focusing us on it in a way that it's very
6 clear we can do something about it if we have bed
7 bugs in our home. We can also do something about
8 it to prevent the spread of bed bugs. This isn't
9 a problem that we are not equipped to solve; we
10 can solve and control it.

11 That's really the focus and purpose
12 of today's hearing is to talk about how to do
13 that. These bills have been designed to make sure
14 that city agencies, with the Council, are doing
15 everything that they can to help New Yorkers who
16 face the stress and problem of having bed bugs in
17 their home. We all need to come together to help
18 combat the infestation that exists and to help
19 prevent that infestation to spreading to other
20 apartments.

21 New York is a city where people
22 live on top, underneath and next to each other
23 like no other city in the world so we need to be
24 very serious about problems like this. That's why
25 it's a great thing, due to Council Member Brewer

1
2 and other people's advocacy that now when you
3 call 3-1-1 you get more comprehensive information
4 and the reports are kept specifically about bed
5 bugs. But we also need to make sure that New
6 Yorkers know that if they call an exterminator,
7 there's a way to know that that exterminator is
8 actually trained and effective on bed bug
9 eradication. That's not something that is fully
10 within our power, that's why we have a resolution
11 calling on the state to take action.

12 We're also, today, calling on the
13 state to do its part by creating long overdue
14 standards concerning the sanitation of unused
15 mattresses being reconditioned for sale. We need
16 to make sure that if somebody doesn't have the
17 financial resources to buy a new mattress but
18 needs one and buys a used one, there's a way for
19 them to know that that mattress is not going to
20 bring bed bugs into their home. If we can't find
21 such a thing, we would have to consider banning
22 the sale of used mattresses. But obviously it
23 would be better to have a wider array of economic
24 options open for people.

25 This problem is something that it's

2 very important that we're all here today looking
3 at it. Because if you look at the facts, in
4 fiscal year 2007 alone, the city's 3-1-1 hotline
5 received nearly 7,000 bed bug related complaints.
6 HPD's Housing Inspectors issued over 2,000
7 violations relevant to this to building owners
8 across the city. This is a problem that exists in
9 the South Bronx, on the Upper East Side, on the
10 North Shore of Staten Island, on the South Shore
11 of Staten Island; it's a problem that can happen
12 in any home.

13 Right now, New Yorkers don't have
14 the level of confidence they should have in in how
15 to deal with it, in where to call, in what is the
16 standard for eradicating and containing bed bugs.
17 I'm very happy we're taking up these legislations
18 today, particularly the idea of legislatively
19 requiring a coordinated task force. I look
20 forward to swift action to all the bills we're
21 looking at today and want to again, thank Council
22 Member Brewer for being so focused and dogged as
23 it relates to this issue.

24 I'm sorry I'm not going to be able
25 to stay for all the bug discussion. But I'm going

1
2 to go. I want to thank you all for having this
3 hearing today and again, thank you Gale. I look
4 forward to moving as quickly as we possibly can on
5 the legislation we're looking at today.

6 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: I'd just like
7 to introduce the Council Members that are here.
8 Council Member Darlene Mealy, Council Member Helen
9 Foster sorry I forgot your married name, Foster is
10 fine, Council Member Helen Sears, Council Member
11 Oliver Koppell, Council Member Jessica Lappin,
12 Council Member Charles Barron, Council Member
13 Kendall Stewart, Council Member Maria del Carmen
14 Arroyo, Council Member John Lui, and Council
15 Member Inez Dickens. With that, Council Member
16 Rivera will introduce the witnesses.

17 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: I thank you
18 very much. First we have from the Department of
19 Health and Mental Hygiene, Edgar Butts, the
20 Assistant Commissioner, Dr. Robert Corrigan,
21 Andrew Iler from DCA and Chief Peter McKean from
22 the New York City Department of Sanitation is here
23 with us today also and Barbara Flynn from HPD
24 Intergovernmental Affairs. You can get started,
25 whichever. State your name for the record and

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2 whatever testimony you have just pass it to the
3 Sergeant at Arms.

4 DR. EDGAR BUTTS: Good afternoon
5 Chairperson Rivera, Comrie and Jackson and members
6 of the City Council Committees on Health, Consumer
7 Affairs and Sanitation and Solid Waste, my name is
8 Dr. Edgar Butts, I'm Assistant Commissioner for
9 Veterinary and Pest Control Services for the
10 Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Along
11 with me today is Dr. Robert Corrigan, an urban
12 entomologist with our department. Also with me
13 today are Barbara Flynn from the Department of
14 Housing Preservation and Development, Andrew Iler
15 from the Department of Consumer Affairs and Chief
16 Peter McKean from the Department of Sanitation.

17 Thank you for the opportunity to
18 testify regarding Intros 57, 872 and 873-A. Bed
19 bugs are small insects that feed on human blood
20 and are usually active when people are sleeping.
21 Adult bed bugs have flat rusty red colored oval
22 bodies about the size of an apple seed. Bed bugs
23 often hide in the cracks in furniture, floors,
24 walls. Adults can live up to one year without a
25 blood meal.

1
2 In most cases people carry bed bugs
3 into their homes unknowingly in infested luggage,
4 furniture, bedding and clothing. Bed bugs may
5 also travel between apartments through small
6 cracks in the wall and in floors. Physical impact
7 to those living with bed bugs may start initially
8 with painless bites which later turn into large
9 itchy welts. These bites are a nuisance and can
10 have a negative impact on the quality of life and
11 ability to carry out the activities of daily life.
12 However, bed bugs are not known to carry disease.

13 Bed bugs have resurfaced in New
14 York City in recent years. In fact, New York City
15 is not alone. Urban centers throughout the United
16 States, Canada and parts of Europe are
17 experiencing a resurgence of bed bugs. In
18 response to this resurgence, the city has
19 instituted a multi-pronged approach to address the
20 bed bug issue. Number one, prevention through
21 public education, number two, creation of
22 guidelines and protocols for residents, health
23 care professionals, businesses and pest management
24 professionals and number three, a systematic
25 responses to bed bug complaints, which my

1
2 colleague Barbara Flynn will describe in her
3 testimony.

4 As part of this citywide effort the
5 Health Department has produced and circulated fact
6 sheets on identifying and responding to bed bugs,
7 How To Stop Bed Bugs Safely. These are the two
8 fact sheets, one is in Spanish and one is in
9 English. They are the same. This fact sheet is
10 available through 3-1-1. To date, more than
11 90,000 copies have been distributed. It's also
12 available on our web site, both in Spanish and in
13 English. The fact sheet provides basic bed bug
14 information as well as ways to get rid of bed bugs
15 if a home is infested.

16 Another fact sheet, Stop Bed Bugs
17 in Hotels Safely, is geared towards the hotel
18 industry. It's also available on our web site.
19 It provides simple instructions for hotels to
20 address bed bug infestations as soon as they
21 occur.

22 Our web site also includes a fact
23 sheet for tenants and landlords on how to choose a
24 pest management professional to manage bed bugs.
25 With more than 1,000 pest control companies and

1
2 thousands of licensed pest control professionals,
3 choosing the right professional to do the job is a
4 challenge. This fact sheet provides a list of
5 questions for residents to ask the pest control
6 companies and professionals before hiring them.

7 Via the Health Alert Network, also
8 called HAN, the Department of Health has also
9 issued clinical guidelines to health care
10 providers on diagnosing bed bug bites and advising
11 patients on safe bed bug control. The Health
12 Department is currently producing a detailed guide
13 on bed bug control modeled after successful guides
14 on the prevention of rats and the safe control of
15 mice and cockroaches in homes. We expect this
16 guide to be complete by June of 2009 and we will
17 initially print copies in English and we will make
18 Spanish and Chinese language versions also
19 available on the web.

20 We will be improving our web site
21 on bed bugs by providing additional resources such
22 as a guide that will also give advice on what
23 people can do to help control an infestation while
24 awaiting a professional and on tips to keep the
25 cost of exterminations down. The city has also

1
2 implemented protocols to control bed bug
3 infestations in city housing. The New York City
4 Housing Authority has trained all of its pest
5 management professionals regarding bed bug
6 control. It follows a protocol that involves
7 working with tenants to prepare their apartment
8 for their visit, applying pesticides for at least
9 two visits where needed and justified, cleaning
10 and vacuuming baseboards and other surfaces. And
11 educating tenants on the appropriate replacement
12 and isolation of infested furniture and bedding.

13 Similarly, the Department of
14 Homeless Services has implemented a protocol to
15 help prevent the spread of bed bugs in its
16 shelters and homes. Shelter operators and their
17 maintenance staff have been trained on appropriate
18 response to bed bugs and reports of bed bugs may
19 result in isolation of clothing, its separate
20 laundering, thorough inspections, client
21 notification and education and repeated visits by
22 pest management professionals. Last year the
23 Health Department, Homeless Services and Cornell
24 University's cooperative extension program
25 collaborated on creation of bed bug guidelines for

2 congregate living environments that have been
3 widely circulated among the shelters. These
4 guidelines are available online from Cornell
5 University's cooperative extension program web
6 site.

7 While complaints regarding bed bugs
8 to the Department of Housing Preservation and
9 Development have increased significantly in recent
10 years, there are currently inadequate data to
11 understand the full extent of the problem in New
12 York City. The causes of the resurgence of bed
13 bugs are not fully understood. Many experts
14 believe a variety of factors including more
15 frequent travel, use of pesticides with less
16 residual activity and perhaps natural variation in
17 the bed bug population.

18 Clearly we have much to learn about
19 bed bugs and their impact on the health and well
20 being of New Yorkers. To this end, the
21 administration agrees with the Council that there
22 is a need to create a task force to examine the
23 bed bug problem further and develop appropriate
24 strategies to address it. Such a task force could
25 bring together experts in the field to

1
2 systematically evaluate, study, identify and
3 recommend ways to control and eradicate bed bug
4 populations in New York City. We believe this is
5 a necessary first step and we would support
6 legislation creating such a task force.

7 While it is possible that some or
8 even all of the strategies proposed in Intros 57,
9 872 and 873-A may ultimately be recommended by the
10 task force. We reserve comment on these bills
11 until the task force is established and able to
12 formally evaluate and recommend appropriate steps
13 to eliminate bed bugs in New York City.

14 Before concluding my testimony, let
15 me acknowledge Council Member Brewer's tireless
16 advocacy on behalf of this issue. Many of the
17 initiatives currently underway are a testament to
18 her perseverance and in pursuing a solution to this
19 serious problem. Thank you for the opportunity to
20 testify.

21 BARBARA FLYNN: Good afternoon
22 Chairs Rivera, Comrie and Jackson and members of
23 the Committees on Health, Consumer Affairs and
24 Sanitation and Solid Waste Management, I am
25 Barbara Flynn, Chief of Staff of Intergovernmental

1
2 Affairs for the Department of Housing Preservation
3 and Development. I'm here today along with my
4 colleagues to discuss the proposed legislation and
5 HPD's protocol for responding to the bed bug
6 complaints.

7 As you are aware HPD responds to
8 complaint of the Housing Maintenance code that are
9 called into 3-1-1. When a tenant calls 3-1-1 with
10 a complaint of bed bugs, HPD may respond by
11 sending a code inspector to verify the condition.
12 If a violation is written for bed bugs, a notice
13 of violation is issued to the owner. In fiscal
14 year 2008, we received 9,213 complaints and issued
15 2,800 violations. This far in fiscal year 2009,
16 we have received 6,703 complaints and issued 2,300
17 violations. By comparison, in fiscal year 2004 we
18 only received 537 complaints and issued fewer than
19 100 violations.

20 After meeting with Council Member
21 Brewer in fall 2007 this past fall, the
22 administration agreed to roll out a bed bug
23 campaign in the three neighborhoods with the
24 highest number of complaints, upper Manhattan,
25 Bushwick and Astoria. The seminars were so

1
2 successful that we were contacted by other elected
3 officials and community boards, prompting us last
4 year to conduct ten additional seminars in
5 addition to our housing education classes. In
6 total, we taught approximately 4,000 students.

7 The briefings were well attended by
8 both tenants and landlords and even some
9 exterminators looking for business. The seminars
10 touched on how to identify bed bugs, conditions
11 that allow bed bugs to thrive and landlords'
12 responsibility in addressing the problem. Since
13 the bed bug seminars were so successful, we're
14 introducing an online course that includes the
15 elements of the seminars that we held last year.
16 After March 2, 2009 just log on to
17 newyorkcity.gov/hpd and you will be directed to
18 our housing education courses where you can access
19 the course. A number of our other instructor led
20 housing education courses also touch on the
21 subject of bed bugs and they will continue to do
22 so even after the online courses are up and
23 running.

24 About a year and a half ago the
25 Council and the Department of Sanitation

1
2 collaborated on legislation that allows the
3 Sanitation police officer to fine anyone caught
4 removing a mattress from the curb. Last year the
5 Department apprehended 29 individuals and issued
6 them \$100 summons.

7 While HPD has no comment on the
8 other provisions of the three bills before us, we
9 agree with the Department of Health, Consumer
10 Affairs and Sanitation. That the best way to deal
11 with the issues that these bills are trying to
12 address is to create a task force that will make
13 recommendations based on solid research to the
14 Mayor and the Council on controlling the spread of
15 bed bugs. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Thank you very
17 much for joining us. I'm going to keep my
18 questions limited to proposed Intro 873-A since
19 that falls under my committee. First I just
20 wanted to find out what types of training programs
21 does the Department of Health offer and are these
22 pest related in nature?

23 DR. BUTTS: We do not offer any
24 training on bed bugs. We do offer a big program
25 on training for rodent control.

CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: But do you offer any types of training for pest control?

DR. BUTTS: For pest control?

CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: In general, yes.

DR. BUTTS: For rat control, yes, but not for pest control. Our focus is primarily on rat control and we also have a program to control West Nile through controlling mosquitoes.

CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: So you do the rodent control now. There's a rodent academy, what's the budget for that?

DR. BUTTS: The budget, what it costs us last year was about \$78,000 is what we invested in the rodent academy. We originally had some very nice grants from CDC. It allowed us to get the rodent academy rolling. We've had some very nice responses. We have a one for pest management professionals, this coming week it's going to start. And we have one for the city employees that's later this year. I guess we've trained over 1,000 people.

CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Okay. So it's \$78,000 more or less for the rodent academy. You

1
2 just answered one of my other questions. You
3 trained about 1,000 people so far?

4 DR. BUTTS: In the rodent academy.
5 It's more than 1,000, let's say 1,100 people.

6 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: You offer the
7 courses online as well or no?

8 DR. BUTTS: Not at this time. We
9 feel that the interaction between the people that
10 are taking the course and the staff is very
11 important to having people understand about rats,
12 how to manage rats and the safe use of pesticides
13 and to minimize the amount of pesticides that are
14 used.

15 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: You believe
16 it's better to have the one on one interaction
17 with the actual exterminators as opposed to having
18 an online training program that is not one on one
19 interaction.

20 DR. BUTTS: I didn't quite hear
21 what you said.

22 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: I'm sorry
23 about that. So you feel that it's better to have
24 the one on one live program opposed to online
25 program?

1
2 DR. BUTTS: At this stage of the
3 rodent academy, yes. But that does not mean that
4 is not something we would consider as time goes
5 by. This program has been going on for, I think
6 we're on our third year. We're just trying to get
7 it right. What we're really focusing on--I know
8 this is a bed bug hearing but what we're really
9 focusing hard on is trying to reduce the number of
10 rats in New York City and improve the quality of
11 life for the people here.

12 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Now could the
13 concept of the rodent academy be a model for a bed
14 bug academy?

15 DR. BUTTS: I think that it
16 probably could. We have the right people in to
17 help us do it. There has to be funding to do it.
18 It was a major effort. We were able to get Dr.
19 Corrigan in and when we got Dr. Corrigan in it
20 really helped us and made a difference in our
21 ability to make the rodent academy better.

22 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Has this been
23 a topic of discussion inside the Department of
24 Health? Has there been any curriculum in terms of
25 a bed bug academy pest situation? Do we know if

1
2 any other jurisdiction that has something like
3 this created?

4 DR. BUTTS: There are a number of
5 people here from the New York City Pest Management
6 that are New York City Pest Management
7 professionals. The Pest Management Professional
8 Group has had a number of courses that have been
9 very effective and they're doing a very, very good
10 job from what I can understand on training people.
11 We relied on that as far as a training mechanism
12 for bed bugs.

13 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Just one least
14 question. How would somebody actually find
15 someone who is qualified to identify and
16 exterminate bed bugs? And to know that they are
17 actually qualified?

18 DR. BUTTS: What I would suggest if
19 you have a bed bug problem is first off don't
20 panic. I know that's hard to say. I would go
21 online or call 3-1-1 and get a bed bug fact sheet,
22 read on that as much as you can. Look for bed
23 bugs and make sure that you have them. There are
24 ways to know. Obviously if you're getting bit
25 then you know you have bed bugs but you can see

1
2 bed bugs. A bed bug is about the size of an apple
3 seed; you can see it. The eggs are small; they
4 are kind of the size of a pin head. But you would
5 see that you have them.

6 Then I would go online and get a
7 copy of How to Choose an Exterminator. The first
8 thing I would do, if I lived in an apartment is I
9 would contact the landlord. Get them to intervene
10 and see what they can do. Because if you have
11 them in your apartment, then there are probably
12 some other people who have it also. It has to be
13 a cooperative effort between the residents and
14 between the landlord and the management. You
15 would get them involved.

16 Unfortunately, there are going to
17 be some people that aren't going to be responsive.
18 Then you would call 3-1-1 and get HPD involved.
19 They would come out and they would do what they
20 need to do. But if you have to a point where you
21 need to pick an exterminator, you would go online
22 and see what the criteria and the questions to ask
23 to pick an exterminator.

24 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: I guess I'm
25 just going to continue. I'm trying to get an idea

1
2 of how can an individual who suspects they have
3 bed bugs identify if an exterminator is actually
4 qualified. I know you said there is a fact sheet
5 or something but how can they find out if they're-
6 -is there any certification that they can get or
7 something that identifies them as a bed bug
8 specialist as opposed to just a commercial that
9 they see on T.V.?

10 DR. BUTTS: The New York State
11 Department of Environmental Conservation
12 certifies. You take a core test and you pass
13 that, then you can choose a category. For
14 example, I took the course and I passed the core
15 course. My exterminator license is for category
16 8, which is health. There is one for structural
17 insects. The person should be licensed in the
18 category to control bed bugs.

19 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Is there a
20 category?

21 DR. BUTTS: There are categories.
22 You can ask the exterminator what his or her
23 category is.

24 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Which would
25 category would be the one that most closely

1
2 relates to bed bugs? Is there a bed bug category
3 or is there one that's close?

4 DR. BUTTS: There is not a bed bug
5 category. There will be some people from the pest
6 management professional industry here who can
7 answer that question better. There are people in
8 the audience. I think Gil Bloom is going to make
9 a presentation and you can ask him, he would know
10 that.

11 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Perfect. Can
12 we also get those flyers sent to our district
13 offices? I saw in today's Daily News that in the
14 Bronx, specifically, the increase in bed bug calls
15 to 3-1-1 has been about 67% more or less
16 throughout the year. If we can get just those
17 flyers that you showed us, the fact sheets. If
18 you can have those sent to our district offices I
19 think that will be a great opportunity for us to
20 give to our constituents besides 3-1-1.

21 DR. BUTTS: Okay. That's fine.

22 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: I'm going to
23 just ask one question and turn it over to Gale
24 Brewer. That is regarding the sale of second hand
25 mattresses. Do you think it's an effective way to

1
2 work to eliminate the issues of bed bugs, to
3 eliminate the sale of second hand mattresses.
4 It's a Consumer Affairs questions so come on up
5 Andy.

6 ANDREW ILER: Good morning. I
7 don't think we have any real data on terms of how
8 effective or whether that would really have a
9 major significant impact because the vectors for
10 transmitting the bed bugs are not all that
11 defined. As you have heard here, they come from
12 everywhere. That may be only a small part of the
13 problem, which is why the recommendation is that
14 we look at the task force to look at the
15 comprehensive issue and then attack it
16 comprehensively rather than these kind of piece
17 meal things.

18 Although I do want to say I
19 understand the Secretary of State's Office has
20 proposed regulations for sanitizing mattresses.
21 They're on their web site, the proposed three
22 methods for sanitizing mattresses. Their
23 preliminary comment period, they have not put them
24 forward for actually the regular formal rulemaking
25 comment, which will be coming up. But they expect

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2 to be moving relatively quickly on this. They
3 indicated to me just today that they would still
4 be open for comments on their current proposal
5 that they are sort of circulating, even though the
6 period formally closed December 30th.

7 They are moving on putting together
8 a method for sanitizing mattresses, which would
9 hopefully address the matter of making sure that
10 whatever is sold in the second hand market is at
11 least clean and safe.

12 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: You don't know
13 when that's going to happen and if that will
14 happen in a timely fashion. Don't you think that
15 we should work to try to protect the consumer by
16 at least notifying them that the second hand
17 mattresses are highly likely to have bed bug
18 contaminations or other harmful contaminations in
19 them?

20 MR. ILER: Right now the used
21 mattresses are required to be identified. We do
22 check; the Department inspectors go out and check
23 second hand stores. Where they see mattresses,
24 they make sure that they are properly identified
25 as used mattresses because that is an issue. That

1
2 is something that we do right now.

3 With respect to--even the impact of
4 saying it, that becomes a tricky issue of telling
5 someone this is a used mattress and it could
6 contain bed bugs. It's not really a notice that
7 you want to put on something that you're selling
8 because it's an uncertain kind of disclosure. Who
9 is going to buy something that may have bed bugs
10 in it? That may be something that's almost
11 impossible to sell. It's better to make sure that
12 everything that's sold is clean rather than
13 putting an iffy notice that just scares everybody
14 away.

15 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: That's why
16 we're leaning to not doing any sales at all until
17 we can deal with the proliferation since the
18 numbers of bed bug complaints are responding. It
19 seems like the proliferation is rising. We should
20 try to eliminate as many as sources as possible.
21 When your inspector goes out, they can't open the
22 mattress to look...

23 MR. ILER: Of course.

24 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: ...inside the
25 seams so they don't really know just on a visual

1
2 inspection whether the mattress has bed bugs or
3 not. Correct?

4 MR. ILER: Our inspectors would
5 only be able to tell whether it's properly
6 identified as a used mattresses, without looking
7 into that.

8 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: There's no
9 visual inspection to go inside the mattress to see
10 if they're embedded in there.

11 MR. ILER: That's correct.

12 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: I think that's
13 a major problem. But I promised to stay to one
14 question so that the other members could speak so
15 I'm going to try to hold to my opinion. But I
16 think that we really need to look to protect the
17 consumer by not allowing the sale. But Council
18 Member Jackson has a couple of questions before we
19 go to Council Member Brewer.

20 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank
21 you co-chair Comrie. I guess my questions are
22 relating to the Department of Sanitation and Solid
23 Waste with respects to the bill that deals with
24 this particular matter. I believe that's Intro
25 872. My question is this: the Committee has heard

1
2 that some garbage collectors will refuse to pick
3 up trash if it is labeled as being infested with
4 bed bugs. Is this Department policy? If not, how
5 will you ensure that this does not happen and have
6 you heard that?

7 PETER MCKEAN: Peter McKean,
8 Department of Sanitation. Yes, Council Member we
9 had an incident this week. A woman on the East
10 Side put out some bedding, a pillow, blankets
11 which may have been infested with bed bugs. She
12 was told by somebody to place the words, may be
13 infested with bed bugs on the front of the plastic
14 bag. It is true our sanitation workers did not
15 collect but it was more to a lack of knowledge;
16 they just didn't know.

17 Again, we don't have any special
18 training. We train our people to take everything
19 that they possibly can. Whether they be infested
20 or not, our mission is of course solid waste
21 disposal, get things off the street. They brought
22 it back to their supervisor. The supervisor went
23 and investigated, spoke with the women and said
24 the material was collected. But that's the only
25 incident that I am aware of. I've been in my

1
2 present position about eight or nine years and
3 we've had no real problems with bed bugs or
4 anything like that.

5 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Have
6 you had any of the sanitation workers subsequently
7 report that they were or either their clothing or
8 other material or even in the cab of the garbage
9 truck or back at the where ever the sanitation
10 garage or anything like that where they reported
11 bed bugs? That they may felt that it may have
12 come as a result of collecting materials off the
13 street?

14 MR. MCKEAN: Not to my knowledge,
15 Council Member.

16 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay.
17 So you would say that the most important thing in
18 this process is education of everyone, both the
19 workers and the public, from what I'm hearing. Is
20 that correct?

21 MR. MCKEAN: That is correct.

22 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: A
23 couple of questions concerning this
24 particular...to what extent, if you have any
25 knowledge, is New York City's bed bug problem

1
2 caused or exacerbated by discarded infested
3 furniture or mattresses, if you have any knowledge
4 of that.

5 MR. MCKEAN: I'm not an expert in
6 the field. All I have is a layman's knowledge of
7 that. Based on the testimony, I could say
8 possibly.

9 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Does
10 anybody else, as far as any testimonies from HPD
11 or DOH?

12 MS. FLYNN: No, but I think that's
13 exactly why we like the idea of creating a task
14 force, so we can bring many people together and
15 hear from different people about it.

16 ROBERT CORRIGAN: My name is Robert
17 Corrigan, I'm a entomologist with the Department
18 of Health and Mental Hygiene. Similarly, we don't
19 know. It's likely that here and there, there are
20 bed bugs in any type of furniture, mattresses, box
21 springs, any discarded furniture that come out of
22 an apartment. But to quantitatively put a figure
23 on that, we don't know. It would be very
24 difficult to get a figure on it. Does it have
25 some impact in some cases? Probably. But the

1
2 overall extent of the bed bug issue in the City of
3 New York, it's very likely immeasurable.

4 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Now a
5 part of Intro 872-A is that furniture and
6 mattresses be encased in plastic with a certain
7 thickness and what have you. How can we ensure
8 that plastic bags or stickers provided by the city
9 will be used? Is that the safest method that
10 should be employed? If you have an opinion on
11 that because the proposal is furniture,
12 mattresses, call 3-1-1 or go in or contact any
13 agency and you can get plastic bags of a certain
14 thickness of which you can put the furniture in,
15 tie it up and put a sticker on there saying this
16 furniture may be infested with bed bugs. Do you
17 have an opinion on whether or not that would work?
18 Is that the best course of action to take?

19 And also, what's the cost factor
20 involved, if anything, regarding this particular
21 bill if in fact this bill was passed into law?
22 And that question is for all of you. You can
23 start with any one of you. Please identify
24 yourself since there are four individuals, for the
25 record, whoever is speaking.

1
2 MR. MCKEAN: Peter McKean,
3 Department of Sanitation. The Department does not
4 support that proposal.

5 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Could
6 you tell me why not?

7 MR. MCKEAN: One, we're not very
8 sure of the purpose of the plastic bag, to be
9 quite honest. One of the problems that we see as
10 a Department, sometimes are scavengers in the
11 street who take mattresses and box springs for
12 resale, commercial processing.

13 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: We see
14 it all the time.

15 MR. MCKEAN: And the Department has
16 acted on that. We issued 29 summons last year
17 citywide to people who were caught in the act
18 using a motor vehicle, taking mattresses or box
19 springs. Again, these are household items that
20 are put out for collection. We think it would
21 make the items more pristine for people in that
22 field that would take things. Right now, if it
23 rains or something else, they can't use it. I
24 think it would just encourage the resale, reuse,
25 recycle of mattresses. As a layman, again, we

1
2 feel it would spread the problem more than correct
3 it anyway.

4 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Anyone
5 else? Just identify yourself.

6 MS. FLYNN: I just want to add one
7 thing. Yes, we agree with what the Chief said but
8 there is also if I were a homeowner or a tenant,
9 would I be willing to do that to say that I have
10 bed bugs. Would I even be willing to put my
11 infested bed into a plastic bag with a bed bug
12 sign or a warning on it.

13 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: The
14 bill doesn't say that if you have bed bugs it says
15 that any discarded furniture that you're supposed
16 to put it in there to say that there may be.

17 MS. FLYNN: Right but as somebody
18 who is doing that would you feel comfortable doing
19 that and your neighbors? Because there is such a
20 stigma--it's not right for the stigma but people
21 may not even use it if we were to offer it.

22 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: So
23 even though the Department of Sanitation expressed
24 their opinion that they don't see this as a viable
25 solution. What about HPD? Does HPD have a

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position?

MS. FLYNN: We agree with Sanitation.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Did you'll collaborate on your opinions before you came in here?

MS. FLYNN: We did discuss the bills.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: So the Department of Health?

DR. BUTTS: Edgar Butts, the Department of Health. We agree with the Department of Sanitation and HPD and their position on the bags.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: What about your specialist here?

DR. CORRIGAN: Robert Corrigan--

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: [interposing] I'm expecting something different than what they said. No, I'm--

DR. CORRIGAN: [interposing] Robert Corrigan, Department of Health. I also agree with the position stated. From an entomological standpoint, you have these tiny, very flat

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2 insects. It would be very, very difficult to seal
3 the mattresses in such a matter that you could
4 guarantee that you could keep the bed bugs
5 contained. These insects are specialists in being
6 able to get through tiny cracks and crevices. So
7 just from an entomological point of view, I think
8 it would be difficult and impractical.

9 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Under
10 the proposal, a mattress or furniture, a big
11 plastic bag that's either tied up or sealed. I
12 don't see how we can seal it but tied up. I don't
13 think it's a huge Ziploc bag that's the size of a
14 mattress. I haven't seen one that big. But I
15 would assume that you put it in there and you tie
16 it up with the bag tie and put it out there.
17 Wouldn't that seal it?

18 DR. CORRIGAN: I don't believe it
19 would. Research would have to be done. There may
20 be some applicability that we would need to
21 measure at a future time perhaps but right now
22 there is no research that would show what impact,
23 if any, it would have on the situation. It may,
24 in fact in some cases perhaps protect the bed bugs
25 if they were exposed to a colder temperature or

1 something, it may be negative for them. But
2 research would be needed.

3
4 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Is
5 there any experience or knowledge that other
6 cities have done this and it has been effective in
7 dealing with this particular problem with respects
8 to sealing it within plastic and putting it out on
9 the curbside for the Department of Sanitation to
10 pick it up?

11 DR. CORRIGAN: I'm not aware of any
12 formal programs nor of any research programs that
13 have measured the impact of doing such.

14 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Anyone
15 else?

16 MR. MCKEAN: Peter McKean from
17 Sanitation again. Council Member I personally
18 called the Sanitation Bureaus or Departments in
19 Boston, Chicago and Los Angeles, again, asking
20 this question about plastic bags. Do you require
21 your residents who wish to dispose of mattresses
22 or box springs or other sleeping type furniture in
23 plastic bags? All three answered they do not.

24 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: They
25 do not require it.

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MR. MCKEAN: They do not.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Is it on a voluntary basis, Chief? Because my understanding that residents are not mandated to do this but they can call 3-1-1. But is anyone using the plastic bag in those cities that you communicated with? Not being mandated but is anyone using it on a voluntary basis as far as a municipality.

MR. MCKEAN: I have no direct knowledge but they could.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay.

MR. MCKEAN: Again, the plastic bag we also see as being problematic. It's costly to the resident. It's difficult getting a mattress or a box spring--

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON:
[interposing] Well under this bill the city would pay for it.

MR. MCKEAN: It's costly to the taxpayer or to the resident. Again, can you just imagine a king size mattress, you as a resident trying to put your mattress and box spring into a large plastic bag?

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2 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I
3 couldn't do it by myself.

4 MR. MCKEAN: Getting it out to the
5 street, you might have to hire somebody to do
6 that.

7 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I have
8 more questions but I'm going to turn it back over
9 to my co-chair. I'll clean up with other
10 questions upon other questions by my colleagues.
11 Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: Now we will
13 hear from the person that has brought us all
14 together today and has been tireless in her
15 efforts and focused in her desire to make sure
16 that this is dealt with, Council Member Brewer.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you
18 very much Leroy Comrie. Picking up on Chair of
19 the Health Committee, Council Member Rivera,
20 obviously the DEC currently licenses the
21 exterminators. The Exterminator Association does
22 a great job on training because of the issue of
23 bed bugs. How could you--I know that this will
24 come up on the task force but how could you work
25 to give the kind of comfort that Council Member

1
2 Rivera was looking for to the aver New Yorker who
3 is just calling up to find out if there is
4 expertise at that particular company? I
5 understand. I know many of these companies and
6 they do a great job but I know who's who. The
7 average New Yorker does not.

8 What can you give us in terms of
9 your thoughts, not necessarily exactly what's
10 going to happen, to work with DEC to work with the
11 Association, to think of ways that the average New
12 Yorker could be comfortable in calling an expert?
13 Because with the rat portal and the rat man and
14 Carolyn and so on, I feel like we are making some
15 progress. But how are we going to do this with
16 bed bugs? I'm looking at you, sir. Yes, Doctor.

17 DR. BUTTS: Thank you. Edgar
18 Butts, Department of Health.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I know who
20 you are.

21 DR. BUTTS: I think that what we
22 have to do is we have to better coordinate our
23 information flow to the residents and the citizens
24 of New York. We have to be clearer in what we're
25 projecting. We are trying to do that and we

1 realized that coordination is really important
2 among agencies. We're working with HPD, we're
3 working with Homeless Services, Adult Protective
4 Services. I think there is a lot that the task
5 force can come up with and make recommendations to
6 help guide us so we're not myopic in what we're
7 doing.
8

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I got it.
10 I was just trying to see. This is a clear issue
11 that we need to think of fairly quickly because
12 that's where people start their phone calls. Even
13 owners call me because they're not sure if they
14 have the right professional support. So I
15 understand you're trying not to answer. I
16 understand. But let's focus on that.

17 Number two, you have Police
18 Department, Education Department, HRA, all the
19 agencies are up there and probably many others who
20 go into people's home, ACS and so on. How are you
21 working to educate city workers on this issue? In
22 your location, there are wonderful folks who
23 represent the APS workers. Their union testified
24 before they even got into the issues regarding
25 their challenges as professionals, bed bugs was

1
2 there main concern. So how are you dealing with
3 all of these individuals? Every precinct I know
4 also has bed bugs.

5 DR. BUTTS: We don't have an active
6 program externally. We have given some advice to
7 people who have asked. We don't have an active
8 program to train people within city agencies about
9 bed bugs. That seems like a very reasonable idea
10 but at this time we don't. We've had some
11 complaints of people being bitten. How do the
12 agencies deal with it? We've met with them and
13 we've tried to work together.

14 I think what we've done with
15 Cornell and Homeless Services, working together as
16 a group to try to come up with some protocols.
17 Working with NYCHA. I think we have a long way to
18 go but we've started the journey.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I don't
20 know if this is you or DCA but the cable
21 companies, the phone companies and the moving
22 companies and the rental cars. Moving companies,
23 somebody in the Mayor's office got bed bugs from
24 moving, U-Haul. So the question is are we doing
25 anything to educate them? I am no expert on

1
2 running cable but one of the issues apparently is
3 when you do, that it's a travel mechanism for bed
4 bugs.

5 I'm just saying, how do we educate
6 those folks also in how to. Again, you can't get
7 rid of them but how do we educate so that some of
8 the concerns in terms of caulking and so on and
9 whatever a moving company has to do. I have no
10 idea what you do with a U-Haul truck when you're
11 finished with it to get rid of bed bugs. But how
12 are we educating people on this issue. Two people
13 in the Mayor's office got bed bugs from U-Haul. I
14 won't give their names.

15 MS. FLYNN: I don't think that
16 we've addressed that issue. We're just starting
17 to think about that now and meeting with other
18 city agencies. I don't think that we've actually
19 thought about the private companies that go into
20 people's houses.

21 MR. ILER: This is where you have
22 to really coordinate because moving companies are
23 regulated, now it's by the Department of
24 Transportation or the State Department of
25 Transportation. So we really don't have anything

1
2 to do with the--

3 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER:

4 [interposing] The U-Haul trucks are local, no?

5 MR. ILER: We don't have anything
6 to do with that either. We only deal with storage
7 companies. When you put the stuff in storage, we
8 deal with those companies. With regard to the
9 cable providers, that's under the
10 Intertelecommunications so we don't have anything
11 to do with them either. It really does involve a
12 whole lot of other agencies that have to think
13 about and be proactive, really comprehensively.
14 That's why we're talking about having a task force
15 that does look at that and promotes it.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. I
17 know there are many people who want to testify.
18 My only final question is with Toronto, the
19 material is in about ten different languages. I
20 know that you have great material on the DOH site
21 but it really does need to be in more than English
22 and Spanish. Toronto has 15 different pages,
23 which I think HPD and the rest of the
24 administration's Elearning, which Barbara Flynn
25 mentioned will address because that's a wonderful

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2 beginning. But I'm must wondering if we could get
3 even the material that you do have translated into
4 more languages. Because it's a traveling thing
5 and the more languages the better.

6 DR. BUTTS: I couldn't agree with
7 you more .

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: So where
9 are my languages doctor.

10 DR. BUTTS: I'm sorry, I'm Edgar
11 Butts--

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER:
13 [interposing] I know who you are. I want my
14 languages.

15 DR. BUTTS: I know but I thought I
16 was supposed to introduce myself each time.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: No you
18 don't. You don't have to.

19 DR. BUTTS: I couldn't agree with
20 you more. But this guide that we're going to put
21 together, to have it translated into a single
22 language is not an inexpensive endeavor and you
23 have to put priorities on... I'm not saying it's
24 not important but it's an expense--

25 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER:

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2 [interposing] Okay. Maybe we can take Toronto's
3 look at it and move it down. Is it possible? I'm
4 just saying Toronto has it already.

5 DR. BUTTS: I apologize. I didn't
6 understand.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Toronto has
8 it so maybe we could look at that, possibly.
9 Thank you very much. I know many people want to
10 testify and I want to hear from them. Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: Council Member
12 Dickens and Council Member Stewart.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Thank you
14 so much Chairs. I want to be sure I understand
15 from Sanitation. There currently are no
16 procedures for disposal that have been written, is
17 that my understanding? Did I get that correct
18 Sanitation? And I apologize I don't remember your
19 name.

20 MR. MCKEAN: Peter McKean with
21 Sanitation again. No, there are no methods.
22 Again, on our web site or in our literature you
23 can place a mattress or box spring out on your
24 collection day.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Did I

1
2 understand correctly that if I label it, if I set
3 out a mattress or a piece of furniture that I
4 suspect or I know that has a bed bug infestation,
5 if I label it your men may or may not pick it up.
6 Is that my understanding? I want to be sure I
7 understand.

8 MR. MCKEAN: We had one incident
9 this week. There is no requirement for you to
10 place anything on your mattress, box spring,
11 bedding, etc. We did have an incident this week
12 where someone wrote in big letters with a sign.
13 Again, it's more mis-education. The sanitation
14 workers just didn't understand; they didn't know.
15 Brought it to their supervisor. In the meantime,
16 the resident contacted 3-1-1 with a question, why
17 wasn't my material picked up? We did interview
18 the resident, etc.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: The reason
20 I raise that question is because with the growth
21 of bed bugs, the population almost becoming to an
22 epidemic proportions, your men might become
23 fearful about picking up. In addition, the
24 Department of Health would be concerned about the
25 spreading. So if I set out an infested piece of

1
2 furniture and your men pick it up, is it possible
3 that they could get an infestation in their
4 clothing, if they pick it up if I do not label it
5 so it's handled properly? No?

6 MR. MCKEAN: It would have to be
7 picked up by the Department of Sanitation anyway.
8 We can't--

9 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS:
10 [interposing] Yes. But if it's not properly so
11 that they're aware so that they can handle it so
12 that they don't get an infestation on their
13 clothing is my questions, your workers, which
14 would cause additional spreading of bed bugs.

15 MR. MCKEAN: That would be more an
16 issue for the task force to study and come up. I
17 have to remind you that our sanitation workers are
18 wonderful workers. Everyday they come in contact
19 with rats, roaches, mice. They are out there,
20 there are many garbage stops throughout the city.
21 They do pick up, they do perform their job
22 admirably.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: I did not
24 mean to infer anything but that. I am concerned
25 about the additional spreading of it is why I

1
2 asked that. Incarceration facilities including
3 local precincts, Department of Health, is there a
4 procedure now where these facilities are regularly
5 exterminated to protect our police force and those
6 that work within these facilities and the local
7 precincts? Hello, anybody, somebody?

8 DR. BUTTS: I'm sorry, I didn't
9 know you were asking. I thought you were still
10 asking Sanitation.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: No, I said
12 Department of Health.

13 DR. BUTTS: I'm sorry.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: That's all
15 right.

16 DR. BUTTS: Could you repeat the
17 question, if you don't mind? Could you repeat the
18 question?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Could I
20 repeat it?

21 DR. BUTTS: Yes, ma'am, if you
22 don't mind.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: I asked
24 are there any procedures currently in place on the
25 extermination of our incarceration facilities and

our local precincts for bed bugs?

DR. BUTTS: Not that I'm aware of. We do not have any such procedures, the Department of Health does not.

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Are there going to be any procedures implemented or are you going to look at it? Because that is another source where our police force and those that work within these facilities could become infested as well as the incarcerated person.

DR. BUTTS: I think that with the question you're asking about the police departments and where people are incarcerated, we will have to defer that to Corrections and PD.

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: You're saying the police department and not the Department of Health who implements and then does the inspections would not do that?

DR. BUTTS: Ma'am, we do not do inspections.

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: All right. HPD then.

DR. BUTTS: HPD does.

MS. FLYNN: We only do inspections

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2 on residential properties so it would not be HPD.
3 They would probably call whoever their landlord is
4 or the City of New York or call an exterminator.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Passing
6 the buck here. It would be DCAS? Are there any
7 rules for DCAS or anybody to exterminate these
8 facilities? Because they also can harbor bed bugs
9 and probably do. Hotel enforcement, are there any
10 rules for hotel enforcement extermination of bed
11 bugs? No? Yes?

12 DR. BUTTS: Edgar Butts, Department
13 of Health. We do have a fact sheet on that. It's
14 online for hoteliers to use as far as bed bugs but
15 that's the extent of it.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: So it's up
17 to the hotels to access it and utilize it? Is
18 that what we're saying?

19 DR. BUTTS: We do not inspect
20 hotels. HPD does the inspection of hotels.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Okay, HPD
22 then. I don't care.

23 MS. FLYNN: I was just told that we
24 do inspect hotels but there are very few
25 complaints.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: I don't
3 know about that. I could give you a hotel that I
4 know is infested. I'm not talking about a daily
5 hotel either. That's why I'm raising the issue
6 about hotels.

7 MS. FLYNN: If we get a complaint,
8 we'll respond do a 3-1-1 complaint.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: So it's
10 only under a complaint.

11 MS. FLYNN: Correct.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: We have a
13 lot of work to do in that task force.

14 MS. FLYNN: Correct.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: Council Member
17 are you done?

18 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Yes, thank
19 you so much Mr. Chair.

20 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: Council Member
21 Stewart.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER STEWART: Thank you
23 Mr. Chair. I have a few questions that I want to
24 ask to clarify. You said that in fiscal year
25 2008, you received over 9,000 complaints and

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2 issued 2,871 violations. Also you said in 2009
3 you had as many violations. Who do you issue the
4 violations to?

5 MS. FLYNN: The owners of the
6 property.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER STEWART: And why?

8 MS. FLYNN: Because they are
9 responsible for their building, their multiple
10 dwelling.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER STEWART: They are
12 responsible for the building but they're
13 responsible for, you say, the infestation in
14 the...

15 MS. FLYNN: They're responsible for
16 what happens in the building. If there's no heat
17 or there's a water leak, we would call the owner
18 and if he or she didn't respond we would issue
19 them a violation.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER STEWART: That
21 violation entails that they pay a fine?

22 MS. FLYNN: They would have to
23 correct the violation within a certain period of
24 time.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER STEWART: That goes

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to any building you're talking about, right?

MS. FLYNN: A multiple dwelling, a residential building.

COUNCIL MEMBER STEWART: A multiple dwelling, all right. I have a question on the exterminators. Is there formal training for exterminators?

MS. FLYNN: I believe there is sir but I am not familiar with the exact training of exterminators. We don't exterminate. HPD does not exterminate.

COUNCIL MEMBER STEWART: What I'm trying to get at is you have exterminators. We may go out there and ask for an exterminator to do work but I'm of the opinion that half of the people who do exterminating in New York City are not trained. Because of the fact that you get folks who come to do your exterminating and the problem seems to persist. Then when you ask them simple questions, whether it's carcinogenic extermination that they use or if it's biodegradable they don't even understand what you're talking about.

I get the impression that somebody

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2 might be working for an exterminating company who
3 may have the certification but that person is not
4 trained, that person who is actually doing the
5 work is not trained, does not understand what the
6 different chemicals and how you use them, etc. So
7 I just wanted to know if the city has any handle
8 on that, to at least--

9 MS. FLYNN: [interposing] The
10 Department of Environmental Conservation is the
11 one that licenses. The State Department of
12 Environmental Conservation licenses the
13 exterminators.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER STEWART: The
15 exterminators, right. I understand that. But if
16 someone comes up to you and says that he is an
17 exterminator, how do you know that? He might be
18 working for that company that might be licensed
19 but he himself may not know. He might have just
20 applied for the job yesterday to go out and do the
21 exterminating for that company. We have seen that
22 in many cases where people leave one company and
23 go to the next and they don't know what they're
24 doing. They're not trained. I just wanted to
25 know if there was a form of training that one has

1
2 to go through to be able to do this job. Because
3 there are a lot of folks who call themselves
4 exterminators and they are not exterminators.

5 Just like a contractor prints up a card and says
6 that he's a contractor and never had nay formal
7 training to be a contractor or to do that kind of
8 work.

9 MS. FLYNN: I think Dr. Butts had
10 mentioned something earlier, right?

11 DR. BUTTS: All exterminators are
12 licensed by the New York State Department of
13 Environmental Conservation. Part of them
14 maintaining their license is to take continuing
15 education courses. There are really three types
16 of people. Some of the industry people can
17 correct me if I'm wrong on this. There are three
18 types of persons, there is your full fledged
19 applicator, who is somebody who has had a license
20 for at least a year, has applied material and has
21 become what the Department of Environmental
22 Conservation considers an applicator. My license,
23 I'm a technician. I'm a rookie because I just got
24 my license and I have not moved to the applicator
25 stage yet.

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2 It's my understanding that a firm
3 can hire an apprentice who would be under the
4 direct supervision of an applicator. But all of
5 these people are supposed to be trained, they're
6 supposed to know what they're doing.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER STEWART: Who is
8 responsible for policing who is going out there to
9 do extermination work?

10 DR. BUTTS: The Department of
11 Environmental Conservation for the State of New
12 York.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER STEWART: For the
14 state so there's no city agency that is
15 responsible for that.

16 DR. BUTTS: No, we're prohibited
17 from doing so.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER STEWART: We're
19 precluded from doing so?

20 DR. BUTTS: Yes. The state has
21 preemption over us.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER STEWART: I think
23 that's all the questions I have for now.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Can I ask
25 a question? You do rat training or you don't?

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2 You do the rat and rodent thing, why can't we do
3 the bed bug thing? Come on Bobby, why can't we?

4 DR. BUTTS: We just started the rat
5 training.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: I'm aware
7 of that.

8 DR. BUTTS: It's been very, very
9 successful.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: I'm aware
11 of that.

12 DR. BUTTS: Quite frankly our focus
13 is on rats.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: I know but
15 we need to have the focus on bed bugs also. So
16 could we also have the same kind of training for
17 bed bugs, the same type of focus as you have on
18 rats? You're not precluded from doing that.

19 DR. BUTTS: I think it's something
20 that the Department could consider.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: As part of
22 the task force.

23 DR. BUTTS: I think the task--if
24 it's a recommendation and it's funded. If it
25 models after the rodent academy, it would be

successful but there's--

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS:

[interposing] Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: You just stated if it's funded. I know the yearly operation of the rodent academy is \$78,000. But what would the upfront start up cost be for a bed bug academy, more or less? What would you anticipate the ball park figure to be?

DR. BUTTS: I don't want to sound like I'm stepping around it but to give you an answer right now I think would be irresponsible. I think it's something we would have to look into and see to the amount that we would--what would it involve, how many people and so on and so forth.

CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Understood. We'll wait for the blue ribbon panel and the task force. But the rodent academy, how much did that cost?

DR. BUTTS: I think it was initially about \$500,000 to begin with, in the neighborhood. I think some of that money was cut back. It was \$450,000 or something like that and that was to get it jump started and to do

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2 everything we needed as far as getting the visuals
3 and so on and so forth and buying the tools we
4 needed. I think for it to be sustainable right
5 now, what we're doing is it's close to \$80,000. I
6 don't know what it would cost to put something
7 like this together. It's just something we have
8 to sit down and figure out.

9 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Okay. I just
10 wanted to see if there's a basis point or a figure
11 we can work within. Now we have \$500,000 for the
12 rodent academy and \$80,000 per year ongoing. It
13 may be somewhere along the lines, that could be
14 applicable to the bed bug academy--

15 DR. BUTTS: [interposing] I can't
16 answer that question.

17 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: We've been
18 joined by Melissa Mark-Viverito and does anybody
19 else have any questions for this panel?

20 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: I have a
21 question. Do you agree to the concept of the task
22 force? Who would be on the task force in your
23 opinion? Who would serve on the task force and
24 what would be the time frame of the task force to
25 come back with some cogent ideas and policies?

2 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Gale
3 Brewer will most definitely be on the task force,
4 right?

5 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: I'm asking the
6 agency.

7 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I'm
8 sorry.

9 DR. BUTTS: The task force is
10 clearly defined in the bill on who would be on it
11 and who would do the appointing.

12 MS. FLYNN: In Intro 57 it
13 specifically outlines it.

14 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: I'm sorry but
15 my main question is how much time do you really
16 need to come up with some cogent policies and
17 practices that could be put into place. Is this
18 task force going to take a month, six weeks, seven
19 weeks?

20 MS. FLYNN: The task force as
21 outlined in Intro 57 talks about one year, that
22 there would be a report within a year or one year
23 later.

24 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: I know it says
25 a year in there but I just don't think that it

1
2 really takes a year to come back with policies and
3 practices.

4 MS. FLYNN: We would have to talk
5 about it.

6 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: We're dealing
7 with an epidemic so I was hoping that the
8 administration would embrace the idea of moving
9 this faster than taking a year to move it and get
10 it to a point where we're going to still be
11 talking about how to implement policies. I
12 appreciate the desire to be deliberative but I
13 would hope that we're not deliberative to the
14 point of being frozen in our steps when there has
15 already been some proven practices and policies
16 that have been effective out there. We don't try
17 to reinvent the wheel but just to take whatever
18 technology and practices are available so that we
19 could move forward. Council Member Jackson has
20 something to say.

21 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I'm
22 just coming for the clean up questions. I had
23 asked the question and I don't know if I got a
24 definitive answer with respects to the estimated
25 cost to the city in offering plastic bags for

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2 disposed furniture and mattresses. I don't know
3 if I got a really clear answer on that. I'm
4 asking that of Department of Sanitation, I'm
5 asking that of HPD or anyone that has any
6 knowledge of that. Another question on top of
7 that so you could think about it is how many
8 pieces of furniture and mattresses are discarded
9 every year? Do you keep a count of that or you do
10 it by the truck load or what?

11 MR. MCKEAN: Peter McKean,
12 Department of Sanitation. I did some informal
13 research on the web, looking at various companies
14 that sell plastic bags that meet the
15 specifications of the bill. The bill calls for
16 bags to be 3 mil in thickness which is a
17 relatively thick bag, it's not an easy bag to
18 handle.

19 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Is
20 that as thick as a garbage bag or thicker than a
21 garbage bag.

22 MR. MCKEAN: Thicker than a garbage
23 bag. Garbage bags could be of various thickness,
24 Council Member, as you're well aware but this is a
25 good quality bag which calls for a 3ml. The

1
2 average price of a bag for a king size mattress
3 would probably be between \$5 and \$7.

4 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Even
5 if you bought it in bulk by the thousands?

6 MR. MCKEAN: Again, I was just
7 looking at direct prices on the internet from
8 various companies that are in this business. You
9 can get cheaper bags with less thickness, 2ml,
10 etc. They are less expensive. As far as the
11 number that we pick up of mattresses, box springs,
12 etc, we have no formal information on that. We
13 have done informal surveys over the year, again,
14 trying to get a handle on this.

15 The best that we can get at is that
16 the average refuse collection truck that goes out
17 each day picks up at least one item that's in this
18 criteria; at least one mattress, one box spring,
19 one sofa. The Department assigns on average 5,000
20 collection trucks per week or an average of
21 260,000 collection trucks per year. Again,
22 informally that's the figure that we think is out
23 there. That's the universe, 260,000.

24 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON:
25 260,000 pieces of furniture or mattresses each

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year.

MR. MCKEAN: Which the bill mentioned, yes.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: You're saying that the average is about one piece per truck per day.

MR. MCKEAN: Yes.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Is that on the days in which big bulk furniture and stuff like that is supposed to be put out or is that just any day?

MR. MCKEAN: Again, our rules and regulations says a resident can put out bulk furniture on any day. You're limited to six pieces per household.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: A resident, a private home you mean?

MR. MCKEAN: Private home, institution, school or city building.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: But an apartment building.

MR. MCKEAN: Six pieces.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: An apartment building is six pieces?

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MR. MCKEAN: Yes.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I thought the furniture and stuff was only about once a week.

MR. MCKEAN: That was many years ago. We used to have specialized bulk trucks. The collection trucks today are sufficient in power and strength that they can take a couch, sofa, mattress on any given day. And yes, there is room on our collection routes to take that bulk furniture.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: I see no other questions for this panel. Thank you very much for joining us. Next we have a representative from Assembly Member Felix Ortiz's office, Sarah Jacobs. Sarah, do you have any testimony?

SARAH JACOBS: Good afternoon. My name is Sarah Jacobs and I'm here as a representative for New York State Assembly Member Felix Ortiz, serving the 51st district in Kings County, Brooklyn. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak here today.

2 The topic of bed bugs raises
3 significant public health concerns. Not just for
4 New York City residents but for any visitor or
5 tourist. These pests are very proficient at
6 finding new locations to live. They can hitch
7 hike and have proven to be difficult to discover
8 and even more difficult to eradicate. As
9 complaints of the existence of bed bugs continue
10 to increase, we must take steps to control and
11 deter the spread of these pests.

12 Any individual or business who is
13 forced to deal with bed bugs incur significant
14 financial and personal inconvenience. The risk of
15 bed bug infestation is very real, especially in
16 environments that encourage shared personal space
17 such as nursing homes, hospitals, hotels, dorms
18 and homes. For this reason, Assemblyman Ortiz
19 supports increased state regulation to combat the
20 bed bug problem within New York. The Assemblyman
21 has sponsored legislation on sanitizing on used
22 bedding and transport and storage of new bedding.

23 It is essential that lawmakers and
24 public officials take the proper steps necessary
25 to ensure the health and safety of New Yorkers and

1
2 reduce the burden of its citizens. Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Next we have
4 Louis Sorkin from the American Museum of Natural
5 History and also Dr. Philip Teano from NYU Medical
6 Center NYC and Jody Gangloff-Kauffman from Cornell
7 University and Ryan Trainer from the International
8 Sleep Products Association.

9 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: Whoever would
10 like to start first, go right ahead. Are all four
11 people here?

12 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Dr. Philip
13 Teano, Jody Gangloff-Kauffman and Ryan Trainer.

14 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: Dr. Philip is
15 not here? Okay. Let's just go with who is here.

16 LOUIS SORKIN: My name is Louis
17 Sorkin. I'm an entomologist at the American
18 Museum of Natural History. On September 18, 2006
19 I addressed the Committee on Consumer Affairs to
20 provide testimony on the common bed bug cimex
21 lectularis areas. It's unfortunately close
22 relationship with people, the preferred host,
23 along with pertinent biological information, and
24 also its relationship to recycled or refurbished
25 mattresses. As I said earlier, I'm an

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2 entomologist on staff in a division of the
3 invertebrates at the American Museum of Natural
4 History and also a consultant to the pest
5 management industry medical community and many
6 other disciplines.

7 An article in which I have
8 forwarded to you in the recent Sunday New York
9 Times referred to me as the man who let the bed
10 bugs bite. I maintain a small colony of several
11 thousand bed bugs for research and demonstration
12 purposes. I am their sole means of nutrition but
13 according to the IRS ruling I'm not allowed to
14 claim them as dependents.

15 I have received public inquiries
16 over the past 30 years concerned with many types
17 of arthropods including insects, which are
18 beetles, butterflies and dragonflies, arachnids,
19 which are spiders, mice and scorpions and
20 myriapods, which would be centipedes and
21 millipedes, all usually referred to as bugs by the
22 general public.

23 I began receiving bed bug inquiries
24 in the last 1980s. Over the past few years I have
25 presented many talks on many insect subjects

1 including bed bugs to a variety of audiences
2 including many in the city. Some of the
3 participants from today' panel have collaborated
4 on some of the presentations including three that
5 there the monthly meetings of the New York
6 Entomological Society and were open to the public.
7 Pest controller personnel have received continuing
8 education, New York State DEC recertification
9 credit for attending.
10

11 As a matter of fact, the American
12 Museum of natural History once housed the
13 Department of Health that was formed in 1910 and
14 disbanded in 1922. It launched many special
15 exhibits and public lectures on various health
16 related subjects, including the relationship of
17 insects, disease and humans. A bed bug was one of
18 the many insect models produced for exhibition
19 during the tenure of this department.

20 *Cimex lectularis* areas, the common
21 bed bug, is known by many common names, some of
22 which include several unmentionable words for this
23 meeting. But bed bug unfortunately happens to be
24 a bad choice of words. A common misconception is
25 that it is restricted to the bedroom and sheets

2 and mattresses and simply spraying the baseboards
3 and treating the bed or throwing away items will
4 not solve the problem. The insect lives almost
5 anywhere it can fit its small body and often this
6 is near you, its food source. But its fit depends
7 upon which of its immature or adult life stages is
8 being considered.

9 Unfortunately, information on most
10 internet sites printed descriptive materials by
11 pest control firms, health departments and the
12 like plus articles in magazines and newspapers and
13 stories on radio and television describe and/or
14 show the adult stage when referring to the common
15 bed bug. For that reason alone it is well known
16 that this insect is somewhat flat and circular,
17 reddish brown and a quarter inch or 4 mil to 5 mil
18 long. It is actually a bit larger and football
19 shaped after sucking its meal of blood to you.

20 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: If I can, I
21 apologize. I have just been informed that we have
22 about 16 people testifying and I see that your
23 testimony is five pages long. Is there a way we
24 can summarize the conversation?

25 MR. SORKIN: I can speed it up a

1
2 little bit.

3 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Yes, please.
4 Thank you.

5 MR. SORKIN: All right. So why is
6 this distinctive insect so difficult to manage?
7 Immature developmental stages called nymphs of
8 which there are five, begin life after first
9 hatching from the 1/32 inch, 1 mil long egg. That
10 has been deposited by the female, most likely in a
11 small crack or crevice in furniture, behind a
12 picture, in the box springs or mattress, behind
13 molding or inside a wall in which she usually
14 hides from others. It has a sticky secretion on
15 it and therefore adheres well to where it has been
16 deposited.

17 The female lays batches of eggs
18 over a period of days for a total of 100 to 400 or
19 more eggs during her lifetime of about ten months.
20 Eggs hatch in about 10 to 14 days and under ideal
21 conditions, the life cycle takes about 5 to 8
22 weeks. Under adverse conditions, generation time
23 could be extended many months. It could be up to
24 three generations per year in the northeast. The
25 first nymph stage is about 1/32 of an inch long,

1
2 pale straw colored and thinner than the paper that
3 this testimony is on. Here's a small bed bug on
4 my finger, full of blood.

5 However, it soon will be plump and
6 bright red after having sucked your blood for a
7 few minutes, although recently hatched bed bugs
8 can wait 4 to 6 weeks or longer at room
9 temperature if a host is not available. Soon
10 after feeding, it crawls away and hides to digest
11 its liquid meal, which allows it to grow molded
12 skin and continue their next nymphal stage until
13 the fifth and then the adult male or female. It
14 can then feed more than once before digesting the
15 blood and then shedding its skin.

16 To assist individualization of size
17 of the nymph, if you simply hold a credit card
18 between your fingers, this is the length of a bed
19 bug, which is right between my fingers, when it's
20 first born. It's an obligate blood feeder and its
21 wingless, although it has small wing pads it's not
22 really wingless. It has a hinged beak for sucking
23 blood. The beak actually doesn't penetrate your
24 skin, only its style. Its very fine, hair-like
25 stylus penetrate, saliva is injected and blood is

1
2 taken out and sucked out.

3 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Again, Mr.
4 Sorkin--

5 MR. SORKIN: [interposing] I'm
6 going to speed up. The social stigma associated
7 with having bed bugs and this affects the
8 psychological health of an individual. Early
9 detection is central to reducing bed bugs
10 infestations in entire buildings. Inspectors,
11 pest management professionals, pest control
12 operators or as they're also called exterminators,
13 supers, the general public often are not aware of
14 the multiple search images one must have of bed
15 bugs in order to discover if a home is infested.

16 Adult and immature bugs, eggs, egg
17 shells, shed skins and fecal staining are all
18 important signs to look for and correct
19 educational materials are needed to ensure that
20 people know what to look for in identifying bed
21 bug infestations. True bugs produce
22 characteristic odors from specialized body glands
23 and bed bug alarm pheromone is described as being
24 similar to coriander. In April 1998, Agriculture
25 Canada published a document on spices, it noted

1
2 that the unripe fruits of coriander have a smell
3 that has been compared to that of bed bugs. The
4 plant is named after Corus, the Greek word for
5 bug.

6 Bed bugs smell like bed bugs and
7 canine scent detection is one tool that aids in
8 pinpointing sites of infestation, though the
9 inspection search time is reduced and early
10 detection is accomplished. There are many non-
11 chemical methods of bed bug eradication including
12 low vapor steam, infrared heat, forced high heat,
13 extreme cold, hot water washing and hot dryers.
14 Special box spring and mattress encasements are
15 highly recommended, too. There are many
16 insecticides labeled for bed bugs but not a wide
17 range of chemicals. True gas fumigations is also
18 available.

19 There are also documented bed bug
20 populations resistant to certain insecticides and
21 its important to collect bed bugs from many sites
22 of infestations so these can be sent to scientific
23 institutions that are studying the chemical
24 resistant in order to employ the proper
25 insecticide to control such populations. The

1
2 phenomenon is analogous to antibiotic resistance
3 to certain health issues and the physician must
4 prescribe specific drugs and not general ones to
5 treat certain infections.

6 The bite is often painless and
7 usually occurs in the night when the person sleeps
8 but hungry bugs can feed during the day light
9 hours as well, especially in dimly lit rooms.
10 Reactions vary from small welts to large welts to
11 extreme itching and to, what I have from feeding
12 bed bugs, is almost no reaction at all.

13 There is a social stigma with
14 having bed bugs and this affects the psychological
15 health of the individual as well. Sleeplessness
16 and irritability effect productivity at work.
17 Guilt and disgust on the part of the homeowner may
18 also effect proper and timely inspection and
19 treatment. Treatment that should have been
20 informed in one apartment and now has to be
21 undertaken in adjacent ones. Since bugs have had
22 time to travel and infest additional homes.

23 The pest management professional
24 normally provides information sheets to the
25 homeowner so they can prepare for the visit. And

1
2 often more than one visit is required to eradicate
3 bugs from the home. IPM or Integrated Pest
4 Management requires cooperation from all parties
5 and relies on many methods of insect management
6 including pesticide treatment. In some cases the
7 landlord or managing agent feels that the price of
8 the bed bug eradication is too high and takes
9 other measures such as accepting a really low bid
10 and doesn't receive proper bed bug treatment after
11 all.

12 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Mr. Sorkin, if
13 you can sum up your testimony.

14 MR. SORKIN: I will.

15 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Thank you.

16 MR. SORKIN: Or provides
17 insecticides to tenants and has them try to
18 control bed bugs on their own. This fails
19 miserably. There are many cases of extensive
20 infestation in homes where elderly or mentally
21 challenged live and sometimes aides sometimes
22 unknowingly carry bed bugs from client to client.
23 Special consideration and assistance should be
24 provided to people who require special help.

25 Tenants do not report infestations

1
2 to the landlord or managing agent for many
3 reasons. One is fear that he or she is the only
4 one infested and the blame for infestation will be
5 placed on their shoulders. In a certain
6 percentage of cases, the homeowner doesn't want to
7 prepare or refuses to properly prepare for
8 treatment and possibly feels that the pest control
9 should do everything or that the landlord or
10 managing agent should do everything since they are
11 responsible for getting rid of and paying for
12 pests.

13 It's recommended to inspect
14 adjoining apartments when one is infested,
15 especially in cases of heavy infestation. What
16 could be done in situations where people do not
17 cooperate and refuse even these inspections let
18 alone refuse to cooperate and treat--

19 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: [interposing]
20 Mr. Sorkin.

21 MR. SORKIN: These actions place
22 the other apartments at risk for infestation and
23 continual re-infestation. I will just go here to
24 the end. The proposed legislation concerned with
25 reconditioned mattresses will have a positive

1
2 effect on reducing bed bug infestation in the city
3 since a primary bed bug reservoir will be dealt
4 with. But much more will have to be done by the
5 creation of the bed bug task force in order to
6 control the spread of this insect in New York
7 City. The task force must integrate many
8 disciplines and agencies within the city to attack
9 the pest bed bug problem.

10 Cooperation must be mandatory
11 between landlords, managing agents, renters, co-op
12 and condo owners, pest management and sanitation
13 personnel, not to mention hospitals, nursing and
14 rehabilitation facilities but also hotel staff are
15 a notorious industry if bed bugs are to be
16 controlled. If people don't work together, the
17 bed bug problem will not go away but will
18 snowball. A search of the internet already
19 provides hundreds of bed bug sites for
20 information. But some of the information is not
21 always true but may be tweaked to sell a
22 controlled product that may not be legal for
23 application in New York State, may not actually be
24 efficacious or may be dangerous to use by the
25 homeowners.

1
2 Some sites are relying on people's
3 fears and apprehension in order to sell a product.
4 An integrated pest management strategy must be
5 followed. Intro 57, 872, 873-A and Resolution
6 1414 must be passed if bed bug control is going to
7 work in New York City. They can be amended as
8 required. Bed bug education in our city will have
9 to be multi faceted on a multi lingual level to
10 convey the information to everyone. Bed bug task
11 forces are already underway in other cities and
12 countries to combat cimex lectularis infestations.
13 New York City needs to follow suit since many of
14 the aforementioned task forces have been
15 successful, the wheel doesn't have to be
16 reinvented here and we can build on good
17 foundations. Thank you very much.

18 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Thank you very
19 much.

20 [Applause]

21 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: First I want
22 to thank you for your very technical testimony. I
23 do apologize since we are on a time constraint; we
24 do have a number of people who want to testify and
25 share their experiences. I do apologize for

1
2 cutting you off. We are going to have to adhere
3 to a three minute time clock because we do have a
4 good amount of people who want to testify here
5 today and we want to give them the opportunity to
6 speak before the Council. So we're going to set
7 up the three minute time clock and adhere to it so
8 that way everyone has the opportunity to testify.
9 You may.

10 JODY GANGLOFF-KAUFFMR. SOTO: My
11 name is Jody Gangloff-Kauffman and I'm an
12 entomologist for Cornell University. I've been
13 working for the New York State Integrated Pest
14 management Program, which is part of Cornell
15 University and Cornell Cooperative Extension for
16 ten years. I'm a community pest specialist, like
17 an urban pest specialist.

18 Bed bugs have been an issue since I
19 began this work in 1999 and the problems and
20 challenges and the number of calls and cases that
21 I get every year as the public finds my name are
22 increasing every year and it shows no sign of
23 slowing. I devote, I think, 90% of my time as an
24 entomologist on this issue.

25 In the past recent years I've

1
2 worked with the New York City Department of Health
3 and Mental Hygiene and also the Department of
4 Homeless Services, as you heard about, to develop
5 a publication entitled Guidelines for Prevention
6 and Management of Bed Bugs in Shelters and Group
7 Homes. And have been intimately involved with New
8 York City's bed bug problem for a while. I work
9 on Long Island and I sort of cover the south east
10 part of the state.

11 I am overwhelmingly pleased to see
12 the City Council, Councilwoman Gale Brewer and all
13 who support these bills taking a proactive
14 approach. It's a very positive step and so my
15 comments are directly about the legislation are as
16 follows.

17 Intro 873-A, the bed bug education
18 and training program; it's my opinion that for the
19 New York City Department of Health to focus on
20 training the pest control industry about bed bugs
21 could be redundant. Due to the limited staff and
22 bed bug expertise in the Health Department, they
23 would be required to outsource their training
24 responsibilities to experts in the pest control
25 industry and universities. You can take this,

1
2 too. However the pest control industry, they
3 already receive training from these sources and
4 they do a pretty good job of training their
5 members. They have continuing education and
6 recertification requirements for being licensed.

7 Better use of limited city
8 resources might be to focus training to landlords,
9 property managers, superintendents and tenants, a
10 public awareness campaign. Because more than half
11 of what needs to happen in bed bug control is non-
12 chemical and has nothing to do with the
13 exterminator. This includes the cleaning,
14 removing cluttered belongings, laundering items
15 like linens and clothing and disinfecting the many
16 household items that may have bed bugs. Also the
17 problem of re-infestation when bed bugs are
18 brought back into the home after treatment, which
19 is compounded by the challenge of gaining access
20 to neighboring apartments. One of the things that
21 we see is that a neighboring apartment could be
22 the source and nobody could get access to that
23 neighboring apartment. In many cases, this is the
24 case.

25 There needs to be a mechanism,

1
2 somehow, for us to gain access for this public
3 health problem. There need to be laws in place
4 that outlines the roles of landlord and tenants
5 with regard to bed bugs because it is a
6 cooperative effort. To prevent abuses of laws or
7 no laws such as eviction of tenants because of bed
8 bugs. Am I out of time? Can I--okay.

9 I want to talk about the sale of
10 mattresses. Banning the sale of reconditioned
11 mattresses might be an inadequate move to combat
12 bed bugs. Although it's believe the reconditioned
13 mattresses harbor bed bugs and other filth, we
14 know that banning only the sale of them in New
15 York City doesn't really address the industry of
16 actually reconditioning them. What's to say that
17 a reconditioned mattresses aren't brought to New
18 Jersey and sold and then brought back into New
19 York City, Westchester and Nassau County. So this
20 law as stated would be easy to avert and the
21 industry of reconditioning mattresses, we know
22 that there are a couple of hundred, at least, in
23 New York City, firms that do that.

24 A better response is to push the
25 state to govern the sanitation of mattresses.

1
2 This industry will always exist and if we can
3 adhere to those then that would be a better, I
4 think, option.

5 RYAN TRAINER: Good afternoon, I'm
6 Ryan Trainer. I'm with the International Sleep
7 Products Association. We represent the mattress
8 industry. I've given you my written comments but
9 in order to stay on time I'll just briefly
10 summarize some of the points that I make there.

11 First of all, the mattress industry
12 supports the efforts that are being discussed
13 today through this legislation to try to control
14 the bed bug issue. So we're supportive of this
15 effort. Second, we would urge you to look a
16 little bit more broadly than just bed bugs. There
17 are other health and safety issues associated with
18 reconditioned mattresses. There are a number of
19 hygienic issues associated with taking a used
20 mattress, putting a new cover on it and then
21 selling it to the unsuspecting public as a new
22 product.

23 One example is dust mites and their
24 droppings. They are in many, many used beds.
25 Many people are allergic to the dust mite

1
2 droppings and these can cause asthma problems and
3 other respiratory problems in children and adults.
4 Another safety issue posed by reconditioned
5 mattresses is that many of them do not meet new
6 federal flammability safety requirements enforced
7 by the CPSC. So I would urge you, if you form
8 this task force to give it a slightly broader
9 mandate to look not only at bed bugs but other
10 hygienic issues associated with used mattresses,
11 in particular reconditioned mattresses as well as
12 the flammability risks.

13 Fourth, I would urge you to
14 slightly modify the definition for reconditioned
15 mattresses. Being a lawyer, I'm worried that
16 there may be some issues on the margins where
17 people might try to argue that their products
18 don't fit within the definition. The Consumer
19 Product Safety Commission in its safety standard,
20 its flammability standard there is a very good
21 definition. At the bottom of my written comments
22 I've offered an amendment, it tracks very closely
23 the standard applied in federal law. I think that
24 to the extent that the city's law can track that,
25 I think we're all better served.

1
2 Lastly, I would also challenge you
3 to look at what happens with the mattress after
4 its picked up. The mattress industry, as part of
5 our sustainability effort, is trying to encourage
6 the recycling of the used components. We want the
7 mattresses to be dismantled, the steel re-melted
8 and used in other products, the fibers can be
9 cleaned and used in other products as can the wood
10 and other things.

11 We have identified about 15
12 mattress component recycling facilities around the
13 country. To my knowledge there is no such center
14 that serves the metro New York area. I would urge
15 you to also look at the feasibility of doing that
16 here so that not only are the products taken out
17 of circulation but that we also gain from
18 recycling the component parts that are there in a
19 healthful and safe way. Thank you.

20 [Applause]

21 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Jackson then
22 Council Member--

23 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON:
24 [interposing] Question for you concerning your
25 testimony. You were saying that there is no

1
2 center here in the metropolitan area but there are
3 recycling locations where they dismantle the
4 various component parts of mattresses around the
5 country. Is that private industry, is that
6 government, is it non profit that have these
7 centers that break apart and use the component
8 parts of the mattresses?

9 MR. TRAINER: It's a real mix.
10 Some of them are for profit entities. A number of
11 them are either running entirely by non profits
12 where the objective is to recycle products but
13 also to provide employment to people are looking
14 for employment history or to people who are
15 disabled. And then some of them are a mix of non
16 profit and government entities. I can send you
17 some information on the existing facilities if you
18 like. My group would be glad to work with the
19 Department of Sanitation or anyone else that is
20 appropriate within the New York City government to
21 explore these options.

22 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: As far
23 as any municipalities, what's the closes
24 municipality, large municipality to your knowledge
25 that is doing this.

1
2 MR. TRAINER: There is a well
3 developed system working in Framingham,
4 Massachusetts outside of Boston. The City of
5 Minneapolis is just launching a program and there
6 are a couple of others that are kind of in the
7 initial stages. Most of the existing ones are in
8 relatively small areas. There is a new one I just
9 thought about in Chicago. I can help introduce
10 you to the appropriate people and you can learn
11 more if you're interested.

12 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Do you
13 know whether or not what other items are made out
14 of the recycled parts?

15 MR. TRAINER: The steel can be re-
16 melted and used as scrap steel in any steel
17 product. The foam material can be cleaned and
18 then ground and reformed in a type of pad that is
19 often used on your carpet called carpet underlay.
20 The fiber products can be used in a variety of
21 different applications from filters to other types
22 of uses. We're also looking at some synthetic
23 fuels that can be made with that. The wood can be
24 chipped, palletized and used as fuel. It can
25 sometimes be used as animal bedding and other

1 things.

2
3 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Do you
4 know any of these locations that have basically
5 made new mattresses or mattresses out of the
6 materials again?

7 MR. TRAINER: I'm not aware of
8 anybody who is taking those products and using
9 them to make new mattresses, no.

10 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I see
11 there are guidelines for prevention and management
12 of bed bugs in shelters and group living
13 facilities. I would assume that many of this also
14 applied to individual's homes.

15 MS. GANGLOFF-KAUFMANN: Absolutely.

16 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: How
17 widely is this distributed? I was just thumbing
18 through it while listening to the presentations.

19 MS. GANGLOFF-KAUFMANN: We printed
20 up 700 copies with a grant from the Northeast IPM
21 centers. We had a \$35,000 grant and it ended us
22 with 700 copies, 120 of which belong to the Health
23 Department currently. I only have 60 left. The
24 rest have been pretty much distributed. A lot of
25 them have gone to non profit organizations, group

1
2 homes and organizations that work with people,
3 disabled, elderly, etc in New York City. We have
4 it available online too.

5 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: It's
6 online, too.

7 MS. GANGLOFF-KAUFMANN: Yes. We
8 would like to print it again.

9 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Say
10 that again.

11 MS. GANGLOFF-KAUFMANN: We would
12 like to print it again.

13 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Now
14 looking at this, have you compared this to other
15 literature that's out there? How comprehensive is
16 this comparatively to what else is out there?

17 MS. GANGLOFF-KAUFMANN: Cities have
18 been struggling to put together guidelines.
19 Australia has a guideline that applies to hotels.
20 This is similar to something that was put together
21 by Toronto which addressed homeless services but
22 we made this broader to address group homes and
23 also to be applicable to dormitories and for
24 apartments. This guide is essentially all the
25 effort that has to go into controlling bed bugs

1
2 that doesn't involve the exterminator. This is
3 all the facility side of bed bug control.

4 So it's a complimentary guide to
5 what the industry has put out for their own
6 exterminators. There is information for the
7 tenant or the client or the person. There is
8 information for a medical service provider. There
9 is information for a social service provider.

10 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: You're
11 saying that the city Department of Health has some
12 of these. You heard that they're ready to put
13 together a task force. I assume that they're
14 going to assemble experts in the field and all of
15 the material from the various publications that
16 exist. Do they have this already?

17 MS. GANGLOFF-KAUFMANN: Yes. They
18 helped produce it.

19 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON:
20 Including this traveler's...

21 MS. GANGLOFF-KAUFMANN: They have
22 access to that. That's something new that our
23 program put together for travelers for college
24 students. It's just a wallet sized card so you
25 can be aware of bed bugs anywhere you are. Just

1
2 examples of the outreach that Cornell University
3 is trying to do.

4 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Sir,
5 my question to you is it seems that you may be the
6 bed bug man. The bed bugs that you have, whose
7 blood are they living off of?

8 MR. SORKIN: Mine.

9 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay.

10 MR. SORKIN: But they're not--

11 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON:
12 [interposing] How often do you dip your hand in
13 there or whatever?

14 MR. SORKIN: It's easy to take a
15 jar full of bed bugs because there's a fine screen
16 top. It's inverted on my arm so they feed through
17 the fine screening. The screening is fine enough
18 not to allow any of the 1ml sized ones out. So
19 they feed through the screening.

20 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON:
21 Through the screen.

22 MR. SORKIN: For demonstration I
23 have free living ones not in that container so I
24 can take them out individually to treat and feed.

25 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: How

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often do you feed them?

MR. SORKIN: Once a month.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: You're laughing and I'm serious.

MR. SORKIN: They could feed once a month, once every month and a half to two months.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I've read material that bed bugs can live without sucking on blood for anywhere from up to a year to 18 months. Do you think that's true.

MR. SORKIN: It's sort of true because that's the problem with the literature I'm speaking about. The original work was performed on bed bugs that were fed and then kept at 50 to 55 degrees, so they lasted a year or more. The ones that were kept at 80 to 90 degrees, lasted a month. So it's temperature dependent.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Why is that?

MR. SORKIN: It's temperature dependent insects. They're dependent on temperature. Their metabolism speeds up when it's warmer, slows down when it's cooler or goes into suspended animation when it's too cold. If it's a

1
2 temperature where it's very cold, they will die.
3 But I've kept mine at 30 degrees for a few hours
4 and the perked up after they warmed up.

5 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: The
6 average home in New York City is approximately
7 anywhere from what, 68 to 80 degrees.

8 MR. SORKIN: Right. A fully fed
9 bed bug adult could last longer than a fully fed
10 immature bed bug.

11 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: The
12 temperature of 68 to 80 degrees, considering the
13 fact that some people say they last from a year to
14 a year and a half without sucking your blood, so
15 people who may have them and get rid of them.
16 They're saying oh my gosh I have to deal with this
17 for another year or year and a half. I have to
18 search and search to make sure there are no bed
19 bugs. I'm just asking for a realistic point of
20 view and if anyone has an opinion on this as
21 experts in the field. As far as a normal
22 apartment temperature ranging from 68 to 80
23 degrees--

24 MR. SORKIN: [interposing] I'm sure
25 that it's less than a year, a year and a half. It

1
2 may be a few months time, six or eight months
3 maybe and I'm guessing at that. I don't remember
4 off hand. They could live but I've kept bed bugs
5 that are unfed. In a population you have unfed
6 ones too and they'll die off within a few weeks or
7 a few months just for not eating.

8 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Good,
9 let them die off. I say that for the average
10 person. Just like you're going to the dentist. I
11 hate going to the dentist but the dentist is
12 something that you have to do. I understand that
13 bed bugs are there and I understand that
14 exterminators that depend on income from bed bugs;
15 that's their living. But I guess my question I
16 would have of you is you hear that once you have
17 bed bugs, they just multiply and multiply. But I
18 assume that there has to be a male and a female to
19 multiply, is that correct?

20 MR. SORKIN: That's correct.

21 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: So how
22 can I separate out a male from a female to make
23 sure--do I get a microscope and look whether or
24 not there's a male and a female? Seriously. I'm
25 not being funny. I'm not trying to waste time.

1
2 But people overall are very fearful of bed bugs
3 and people say I can pick up a bed bug sitting in
4 this chair and wind up getting it in my clothing
5 and taking it home.

6 MR. SORKIN: Especially if it's an
7 early nymph that's a millimeter long.

8 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON:
9 Assuming that there's only one, I need a match in
10 order to--

11 MR. SORKIN: [interposing] You need
12 a match. Well that one will feed on you until it
13 reaches its adult stage. If it's a male it will
14 last a few more months and then die off. If it's
15 a female because it hasn't mated it will also last
16 a few months and die off.

17 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: So
18 until they find a partner, if it's only one then
19 they're in trouble.

20 MR. SORKIN: Right.

21 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON:
22 They're destined to die.

23 MR. SORKIN: Right.

24 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Any
25 other comments. I'm sorry. Help me out here.

1
2 MS. GANGLOFF-KAUFFMR. SOTO: I
3 think people often pick up inseminated females you
4 are the ones that tend to wander.

5 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON:
6 Inseminated means they already been mated.

7 MS. GANGLOFF-KAUFFMR. SOTO:
8 They've already met their match.

9 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON:
10 They've already made love to the other love bug
11 and they're going to have how many babies then?

12 MR. SORKIN: It varies. It could
13 be 100, 200, 300.

14 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: How
15 many? No. Based on the fact that if I picked up
16 an--

17 MR. SORKIN: It varies.

18 MS. GANGLOFF-KAUFFMR. SOTO: I
19 think they would need to be inseminated again? It
20 would vary.

21 MR. SORKIN: No, it varies. It
22 takes time. If a bed bug has mated already but
23 she hasn't eaten the sperm usually don't last long
24 because they need the blood in there too if she
25 keeps them alive.

1
2 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: So
3 assuming that I picked up one that has already
4 mated and I bring it home somehow. Then they suck
5 on my blood, how many babies can be produced
6 assuming that there are no other male adults
7 around?

8 MS. GANGLOFF-KAUFFMR. SOTO:
9 Technically infinite because offspring are adults.
10 If she's still around she can mate infinitely or
11 her offspring can mate infinitely.

12 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: How
13 many offspring normally come out of an adult
14 female once they've mated?

15 MR. SORKIN: It could be as low as
16 50, it could be up to a few hundred or more from
17 one female.

18 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: After
19 making love once only?

20 MR. SORKIN: Probably would last if
21 she's alive for at least 30 days and she hasn't
22 mated again.

23 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON:
24 Assuming there is no male around, how many babies
25 can come out of that one mating session?

1
2 MR. SORKIN: It could be a few
3 hundred, it's hard to say.

4 MS. GANGLOFF-KAUFFMR. SOTO: We
5 don't know for sure.

6 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: You
7 mean to tell me it could be a few hundred?

8 MR. SORKIN: Right.

9 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: You've
10 answered that. My question to the other two, do
11 you concur that it could be anywhere from 25 to 50
12 to 100 to 200 as a result of that one mating
13 session assuming that the female bug got caught on
14 my jacket and I brought it home? I'm not
15 laughing, I'm serious.

16 MS. GANGLOFF-KAUFFMR. SOTO: I
17 think it's a guesstimate and I think I would be
18 safe to say 50.

19 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay
20 but then once they have babies, if they're male
21 babies become adults, that's where the multiplying
22 factor comes into play.

23 MS. GANGLOFF-KAUFFMR. SOTO: That's
24 right and that's usually why it goes undetected in
25 a home until it's out of control.

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ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay.

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Well thank you very much.

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CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: I just have a real quick follow up before Council Member Brewer. Half jokingly but can the science community come up with a spermicidal type of situation to make sure we can get these bed bugs extinct? Is there a way to do that to neutralize to make them sterile.

MS. GANGLOFF-KAUFFMR. SOTO: I think the problem is we can't get to all of them. We can't treat them all. We don't need a spermicide, we need to be able to--

MR. SORKIN: [interposing] We need a trap and attracting system if you want to get them out from places first and that's being worked on.

CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Is there an attracting system to get them, the pheromones or something like that to lure them into a central location and then--

MR. SORKIN: [interposing] Some of that's being worked on now and some of the traps that are out but it probably wouldn't pull all of

1 the bugs out from one room.

2
3 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: My follow up
4 question was I know that Jody you mentioned that
5 the city shouldn't spend its resources on training
6 the exterminators. But part of the rationale for
7 doing it so we can have an legitimate list of
8 people who are qualified so that residents can
9 identify them. Is there a list that you know of,
10 is there anywhere we can identify who is certified
11 and who is qualified?

12 MS. GANGLOFF-KAUFFMR. SOTO: No
13 because there is no specific certification for bed
14 bug control. The industry takes care of itself.
15 I have participated in the rodent academy and I
16 think that that's an interesting model for this.
17 If you have a bed bug czar and a bed bug task
18 force and a bed bug academy, it could be an
19 effective way to look at the problem. In
20 particular, the rodent academy is useful because
21 it takes the exterminators out into the field,
22 which Bobby forgot to mention, out in the field to
23 do real life field inspections of rodent problems
24 and to see first hand, which is why you can't
25 teach this online.

To do that with bed bugs would be overwhelmingly useful for many exterminators who don't have the field experience.

CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Council Member Brewer.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you. Very quickly Dr, Gangloff-Kauffman, I know you didn't have time on the bed bug bag labeling. Can you just expand on that because obviously there is no agreement on how we would handle this mattress problem.

MS. GANGLOFF-KAUFFMR. SOTO: Right. When I counsel people who call me they say I want to get rid of this, I want to get rid of that. I say don't do it. You need a place to sleep and the mattress is where you're going to sleep or you're going to sleep on the floor. A better option for the city if you're going to spend money on bags to dispose of things and money on disposal is to spend money on mattress covers. Either giving them out free or as a subsidized cost to allow people to keep their sleeping area and to make it not a harborage for bed bugs until the problem is solved.

1
2 Also there are very clear ways to
3 wash wooden furniture and all kinds of things to
4 eliminate bed bugs on those items. And that
5 prevents those things going into the waste stream
6 and being a source of transmitted bed bugs. So I
7 think that we could approach it in a different way
8 but it would require some funding.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Now Little
10 Sisters of Assumption and Lopez have been talking
11 about this; you talked a little bit about this
12 thermal idea. Can you just expand on that for a
13 minute?

14 MR. TRAINER: There are different
15 heat treatments from infrared heat to forced
16 heated systems that force with fans to heat up
17 rooms or heat objects up. At a lethal temperature
18 and I think they get up to about 140 or so and
19 leave it at a prescribed time. Then all the in
20 stars, the nymphs, the eggs and adults are killed.
21 Of course if you wanted to use mattresses and
22 refurbished mattresses, putting them through like
23 I think in Las Vegas to run them through a heat
24 system to kill everything that's on it and in it.
25 Then it can be refurbished or of course it can be

1
2 taken apart and use the component parts for other
3 things too.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: That's
5 something else for the task force to consider.

6 MR. TRAINER: That would be good.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Mr.
8 Trainer, thank you. I think that not only did you
9 provide testimony on the current legislation but
10 you gave us some ideas for greening our city.
11 Thank you.

12 MR. TRAINER: Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Council Member
14 Dickens.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Thank you.
16 Just a quick question. What if I can't afford to
17 get new bedding, what can I do in order to protect
18 myself?

19 MS. GANGLOFF-KAUFFMR. SOTO: Cover
20 your mattress.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: With what?

22 MS. GANGLOFF-KAUFFMR. SOTO: The
23 mattress encasements, some have been developed
24 specifically to combat bed bugs. The bed bugs
25 can't bite through them and they can't escape

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through the zipper.

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: If I encase my mattress, do they eventually die because they can't feed?

MS. GANGLOFF-KAUFFMR. SOTO: Right. And the encasement itself makes for a solid, completely white without any folds and any hiding spots surface on your mattress so it can be easily inspected and easily cleaned.

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Is this encasement, does it have a zipper.

MS. GANGLOFF-KAUFFMR. SOTO: Zipper.

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: What is it made of by the way?

MS. GANGLOFF-KAUFFMR. SOTO: Cotton.

MR. SORKIN: It depends on the company. There are various fabrics that are used.

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Questions? One last thing, can we get a copy of this because I'm pursuing through it. Do we have enough for everyone?

1
2 MS. GANGLOFF-KAUFFMR. SOTO: I
3 don't have enough for everyone but I will mail a
4 packet to you if...absolutely.

5 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: There are no
6 other questions for the panel so thank you very
7 much.

8 MS. GANGLOFF-KAUFFMR. SOTO: Thank
9 you.

10 [Applause]

11 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: The next panel
12 will be Gil Bloom from the New York State Pest
13 Management Association, Richard Cooper the
14 independent expert, Jeff Isenberg Pest Away
15 Exterminating and Timothy Wong from M & M Pest
16 Control. As stated earlier, we're going to be on
17 a three minute clock. As you see there will be
18 questions asked afterwards so if you can summarize
19 your testimony and obviously there will be follow
20 up questions. Again it's Timothy Wong, Jeff
21 Isenberg, Richard Copper and Gil Bloom. You may
22 start, whoever wants to start. Again, three
23 minute clock and then we'll be asking questions.
24 So whoever wants to begin.

25 GIL BLOOM: Good day, my name is

1
2 Gil Bloom. I am an entomologist and testified
3 before you today as I did at the 2006 hearing on
4 behalf of the New York State Pest Management
5 Association as Vice President of an 80 year old
6 New York City pest control icon, standard pest
7 management and as a concerned New Yorker.

8 I personally have been involved
9 with the current bed bug outbreak since 1999.
10 During that time I have implemented service
11 protocols and have been involved in treatment as
12 well as the dissemination of bed bug information
13 to many groups and social service agencies. Most
14 recently I served on the advisory committee for
15 the publication which Jody Gangloff spoke about,
16 produced by Cornell University.

17 My comments then are as follows:

18 Intro 57, it is certain that a number of bed bugs
19 cases have been spread through the introduction of
20 pre-owned mattresses along with other furniture
21 into a dwelling. So it would logically follow
22 that a ban on improperly refurbished mattresses
23 would reduce some of these cases. However it is
24 unlikely that a local ban limited to used and
25 refurbished mattresses alone would ensure

1
2 significant reduction as underground distribution
3 would likely increase. Other items may also
4 introduce bed bugs.

5 The fact remains that there is a
6 real need by some New Yorkers for inexpensive
7 mattresses. What would be more comprehensive
8 would be legislation such as 1414 to mandate the
9 state license division to enact statewide
10 regulation.

11 With regard to the establishment of
12 a bed bug task force, we not only support this
13 endeavor but would offer our assistance with the
14 hopes of improving the quality of life for many
15 New Yorkers.

16 Intro 872, in a control scenario
17 anything that can be done to remove bed bug
18 infested items from the interior of a premise as
19 quickly as possible would be of assistance in
20 reducing the spread of bed bugs in that structure.
21 Additionally, having a uniformly accepted bed bug
22 precautionary sign could reduce the potential of
23 infested items from being picked up on the street
24 and ending up subsequently in people's houses and
25 spreading an infestation.

On Intro 873-A, one of the key elements needed to successfully confront the bed bug situation is education of the public. In that regard, we support an increased public education awareness effort by the Department of Health. Conversely, in regard to the development of pest specific protocols, pesticide recommendations and the training of New York State certified applicators and technicians in they most modern and efficacious methods of treatment for cimex lectularis, it is our opinion at this time that the Department has neither the resources nor expertise in this matter. Additionally that this matter falls under the jurisdiction of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

Our concern is that in the constantly evolving world of bed bug research and control, that if this part of intro 873 would be enacted that we in New York City would be stymied by what would quickly become outdated recommendations, protocols and an inability to train hundreds of applicators in a timely manner.

At this point I thank you for your

1
2 time and wish you wisdom in dealing with the
3 bigger bed bug picture for us all. Thank you.
4 And with five seconds to spare.

5 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: We appreciate
6 it.

7 RICHARD COOPER: Hi, my name is
8 Richard Cooper and I'm pleased to be here today.
9 I am an urban entomologist. I also work on the
10 task force that Dr. Jody Gangloff-Kauffman was
11 speaking about with the guide, co-authored the
12 only comprehensive text on bed bug control which I
13 actually gave a copy to Gale Brewer so she has a
14 copy if you're interested in taking a look at it.

15 I reside in Pennsylvania. I work
16 in New Jersey and I'm here in New York today
17 simply because of the magnitude of the problem
18 that bed bugs present. I dedicated the last ten
19 years of my life to this problem, spend the
20 majority of my time dealing with the issue. The
21 main purpose for me being here today is to offer
22 my services as an independent expert to assist in
23 any kind of technical information as this
24 legislation proceeds.

25 I'm going to limit my comments

1
2 regarding the actual Introductory bills but I do
3 want to recognize and thank the sponsor for the
4 great attention to this matter. It's a very
5 serious problem not only in New York but
6 throughout the country as well as in a number of
7 other countries in the world.

8 As far as the legislation goes, I
9 really think the most important aspect of this
10 legislation that I see will bring the most benefit
11 to the New York public would be the development of
12 this task force. Banning the resale of
13 mattresses, I recognize that there is a problem
14 with bed bugs associated with reconditioned
15 mattresses. That is a real issue however I don't
16 think that's the primary method by which bed bugs
17 are dispersed throughout the city. There are many
18 other avenues that are probably of greater risks
19 such as picking up other types of disposed
20 furniture, purchases of second hand furniture,
21 staying in infested hotels and you could go on and
22 on and on.

23 There are a number of people who
24 are less fortunate. I personally can't imagine
25 purchasing reconditioned mattresses but there are

1
2 a number of people that are less fortunate that
3 rely on affordable bedding. I think eliminating
4 used bedding as a way of managing the bed bug
5 problem is really not the best way to go. I have
6 to agree also that it should really fall more on
7 the regulations that govern proper handling and
8 reconditioning of reconditioned beds.

9 I think that the task force could
10 really address many of the issue and the important
11 subjects that are brought up in the other two
12 introduced bills and that's the aspect of the
13 legislation that I would like to strongly support.
14 Thank you very much.

15 JEFF ISENBERG: Good afternoon, my
16 name is Jeff Isenberg, Principal of Pest Away
17 Exterminating. We've been serving the New York
18 area for over 19 years and we've been dealing with
19 bed bugs in a very meaningful way for the past 12
20 years. This has been a long flight for everyone.
21 I'm going to try to not reiterate anything we've
22 already heard here but I want to emphasize a
23 couple of really important points.

24 We're based right here in the heart
25 of Manhattan, with tens of thousands of cases we

1 studied we understand the pain of New Yorkers.

2 The mattress recommendation is all good. It's a
3 very small part of the puzzle. The task force is
4 ultimately probably going to get to a much bigger
5 piece of the problem.
6

7 People ask me every day how do you
8 get rid of bed bugs. It's not about the
9 pesticides per se, it's not about being clean.
10 The answer is education and education doesn't
11 limit. It certainly should be to our industry
12 because we're supposed to be relied upon to get
13 rid of them. Certainly if we don't have the
14 expertise to get rid of them then nobody has a
15 shot of getting rid of them. The first step is to
16 actually for our industry to get their act
17 together and to be better qualified in serving the
18 public.

19 The public is a lot bigger piece of
20 the puzzle than we are. They need to be educated
21 in a variety of ways. You've had campaigns
22 before, whether it was about rats and people just
23 don't know. There is a plethora of information on
24 the web; very confusing to many people. I walked
25 into homes and I see garlic wrapped around

1
2 people's necks because they heard that gets rid of
3 bed bugs. It's not true. The task force is
4 certainly the first start.

5 I testified three years ago. I
6 said it then that it's about education. I
7 wouldn't try to pinpoint the nature of bed bugs
8 and how they spread on any one particular thing,
9 that would be a tragic mistake. There is no place
10 that we have not treated for bed bugs in the city,
11 Broadway shows, sleep clinics, hospitals, you name
12 it, doctor's offices. We don't want to preach
13 fear but we want to preach awareness.

14 There are a number of people that
15 simply can't afford. It's not a socio-economic
16 problem but unfortunately the people who have it,
17 who can't afford it are going to continue to
18 spread it. We need to address that or otherwise
19 we're never going to get the bottom of this
20 problem.

21 Gale Brewer has fought furiously
22 trying to deal with this problem. I believe that
23 with enough effort, of course there are economics
24 involved. You need to allocate the scarce
25 resources to the most effected areas that are

1
2 needed. Mattress industry is, again, a very small
3 part. I recommend just to try to target the
4 general population, let them know what's involved.

5 Mattress covers, of course there is
6 an expense to it. But rather than throw out a
7 mattress and run the risk of spreading it
8 throughout the city, just cover it and you're
9 done. They'll die inside their. You don't have
10 to go through all that rigor maroh [phonetic] of
11 having to throw out mattresses, labeling them,
12 mattress bags. Just cover it, it's probably a lot
13 less expensive. Any kind of funding you could do
14 would be very helpful.

15 Education of supers, management
16 companies and tenants would really go the
17 furthest. Thank you.

18 TIMOTHY MR. WONG: Thank you for
19 the opportunity to speak. First and foremost I
20 would like to commend Council Member Gale Brewer
21 for bringing this underground epidemic to the
22 forefront of the public. My name is Timothy Wong,
23 I'm the Technical Director at M & M Pest Control.
24 M & M is an environmental friendly pest control
25 division of M & M Environmental and we are also

1 headquartered in Manhattan.

2
3 About five years ago our company
4 had a total of about ten bed bug calls. Today, we
5 do on average about 10 to 15 bed bug jobs a day.
6 It's insane how much it's grown. Before we treat
7 any premises we usually do an inspection and we
8 survey all clients. What we've learned over the
9 years is that more than 50% of our clients believe
10 that the bed bugs come from the neighboring
11 apartments. At M & M all of our technicians are
12 extensively trained on the biology and treatments
13 of bed bugs. No matter how experienced our teams
14 are, our treatment will not work because building
15 owners and tenants are not cooperating.

16 If the building has multiple
17 apartments with bed bugs, the entire apartment
18 must be treated and inspected. Landlords and
19 tenants must stop blaming each other for bringing
20 in bugs and they have to start working together.
21 It's just a no win situation for both parties.
22 Landlord has to pay for the extermination, the
23 tenant has to pay for the cleaning and preparation
24 of extermination. Everyone must stop discarding
25 infested mattresses without properly securing them

1
2 first.

3 I'm not a proponent of discarding
4 mattresses entirely because I believe that you can
5 save them if they do it properly. But if they are
6 going to discard them, you can't stop everybody.
7 We should be able to discard them in a proper
8 manner by securing them in bags.

9 To eliminate bed bugs we need to
10 have more than just pesticides or recommendations,
11 we need to have changes in the policy. I'm a firm
12 supporter of establishing guidelines for the
13 proper disposal of infested mattresses, if we are
14 to do so. And creating a guideline and mandate
15 for treating bed bugs on a macro level. Thank you
16 for your time.

17 TIMOTHY WENK: My name is Timothy
18 Wenk, I'm an attorney. I represent hotels and
19 landlords and management companies. A couple of
20 years ago I got my first bed bug case and I did
21 some research. I talked to some of the folks in
22 this room and learned a lot about bed bugs. I
23 wrote an article in the Not Time. I've been asked
24 to speak around the country about bed bug legal
25 implications in dealing with bed bugs.

1
2 In fact I came here about two and a
3 half years ago and encouraged you to pass a law
4 then. Since that time I heard the numbers in the
5 opening statements, there's been a lot more
6 complaints, there's been a lot more bed bug bites,
7 there's been a lot more news coverage on it and no
8 law has been passed. I'm a little disappointed.
9 I don't know why there hasn't been a bed bug task
10 force or a bed bug czar or something created.
11 This is New York after all.

12 There's a law pending. The federal
13 government has a bed bug law pending. It's called
14 the Don't Let the Bed Bug Bite law of 2008. It's
15 pending now. New Jersey has a law pending.
16 Boston has enacted a law. New Jersey City has
17 enacted a law. Hawaii has legislation pending.
18 San Francisco has legislation passed already.
19 From what I understand Toronto also has laws
20 passed dealing with bed bugs.

21 How come in my city we don't have
22 laws? This is New York, 9 million people. You
23 can't swing a cat in this city without hearing a
24 bed bug story. It's all over the newspapers, it's
25 all over the T.V. It's an issue and it should

1
2 have been addressed three years ago. I have a
3 minute and 40 seconds left. I'm not going to go
4 on and repeat what everybody else has said here.
5 I'm going to let some of the people who have been
6 bitten by bed bugs talk, talk about that
7 experience.

8 [Applause]

9 That's what I deal with everyday,
10 people calling and complaining. I'm going to let
11 these folks talk.

12 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Coming
13 in and giving testimony on this very important
14 subject. I guess I have some questions concerning
15 as far as when tenants. The majority of the
16 people that I represent in Northern Manhattan,
17 they live in tenement apartment buildings. My
18 understanding is when a tenant knows that they
19 have bed bugs in their apartment, they should
20 contact the landlord or the owner of the building
21 in order for a pest management company. That's
22 normally paid by the landlord in my understanding.

23 I'm curious as to what is the
24 average cost to tenants or to the landlord in
25 order to address a bed bug problem in one unit. I

1
2 know that the answer depends on how much
3 infestation is, whether its confined to one room
4 or throughout the house, so forth and so on. I'm
5 curious about what is the general cost on an
6 average in order to get rid of bed bugs in one
7 unit. If there's a belief by the contractor that
8 there is infestation in other units in the
9 building.

10 Let's assume that the landlord says
11 I have apartment 5A and apartment 1B complaining
12 of bed bugs. Is there a discount to an owner in
13 order to deal with the multiple problems? If so,
14 at what level? Is it a discount on two units,
15 five units, ten units or what? I'm trying to get
16 a handle as to the cost factor. And I know that
17 may be different depending on the pest management
18 company, how big, how small and how big the
19 problem is but there must be an average so give me
20 a range somebody. Help me out.

21 MR. BLOOM: At the outset--

22 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON:

23 [interposing] I'm sorry. Who are you again?

24 MR. BLOOM: My name is Gil Bloom.

25 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: And

1
2 you're the New York Pest Management Association.

3 MR. BLOOM: Yes.

4 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Is
5 that association of the pest management companies?

6 MR. BLOOM: Yes, across the state
7 including members in New York City.

8 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay.

9 MR. BLOOM: It depends on what is
10 the preparation, who is going to do it, is it
11 going to be the pest management company, is it
12 going to be the homeowner? Who is going to be
13 vacuuming? Are they going to be supplying
14 mattress encasements? What is the severity? How
15 many beds? You get an idea how the numbers
16 fluctuate. I would say that a price range would
17 range roughly between \$500 to \$1,000 for a one or
18 two bedroom apartment and that would usually
19 entail two visits or so, which is the minimum of
20 the norm. Just to give you an idea of what the
21 swing might be.

22 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Do you
23 have any knowledge that any of the companies that
24 may be called by a building owner where they are
25 actually supplying mattress covers in order to

1
2 deal with this situation? I haven't heard where a
3 building owner is supplying mattress covers to
4 tenants but if you're aware of that in New York
5 City--

6 MR. BLOOM: [interposing] Oh, yes.

7 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: You're
8 saying the answer is yes.

9 MR. BLOOM: Yes.

10 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: And
11 attorney, you represent many clients as landlords.

12 MR. WENK: I'm not familiar with
13 that, I think that's a very great idea if that's
14 your suggestion--

15 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON:
16 [interposing] No, I'm just asking because I have
17 not heard where that's happening. If you're at
18 the Pest Management Association the answer is yes,
19 that has happened, that's good to know.

20 MR. BLOOM: It is an offered
21 service. Some avail themselves, some don't. It's
22 offered individually to tenants or homeowners.

23 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Do any
24 of you have an opinion about what one of the other
25 panelists said about the heat versus the cold and

1
2 the longevity of bed bugs? Just identify yourself
3 in response to the question, if you don't mind.

4 MR. COOPER: My name is Richard
5 Cooper. I'll be happy to answer that question and
6 also--

7 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON:
8 [interposing] Richard, who are you affiliated
9 with?

10 MR. COOPER: Richard Cooper. I'm
11 just representing myself as an independent expert
12 on bed bugs.

13 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Expert
14 as far as academic or as a pest management
15 company?

16 MR. COOPER: That's a good
17 question.

18 [Laughter]

19 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Or
20 both.

21 MR. COOPER: I'm not an academic.
22 I am a research entomologist by training and I am
23 a specialist in urban entomology. I do traveling
24 all around the country speaking on the subject of
25 bed bugs. I've written on the subject. But I do

1
2 also have a pest control background and come from
3 a pest control firm.

4 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay,
5 go ahead.

6 MR. COOPER: As far as heat goes, I
7 think what you're going to find. It was
8 interesting to listen to the city and the position
9 that they're in. It's a difficult position
10 because I think you're going to find on any
11 subject that you ask unfortunately no answer is
12 going to be a simple answer, no question is a
13 simple question. Heat is not a simple subject;
14 there are lots of different ways of dealing with
15 heat.

16 We certainly know that you can use
17 heat from a simple measure as hot laundering. A
18 hot dryer is a highly effective method, one of the
19 most effective methods in destroying bed bugs, in
20 laundering clothing. There are portable heat
21 chambers that have been developed for items that
22 could not be put in a washer or dryer. There are
23 structural heat treatments that can be rendered in
24 terms of heating entire structures.

25 But that's a very, very involved

1
2 subject. Some is forced hot air with propane,
3 that's not going to work in city limits. Then
4 there is electrical heating but that has great
5 energy demands. And then there's portable heat
6 units that have generators which might have space
7 requirements depending on where you're going to
8 park it. It can be done very effectively but it's
9 not straight forward and simple.

10 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: But
11 you heard my questions, I don't know if you were
12 here when I said that my understanding is that bed
13 bugs can live between a year and 18 months. One
14 of the respondents said yes, but that was in a
15 controlled environment where the average
16 temperature was about 50 or 60 degrees. My
17 question regarding a normal apartment building in
18 New York City the temperature ranges anywhere from
19 68 degrees to 80 degrees. He was saying that more
20 than likely because of the heat, the longevity
21 would be closer to six months or something like
22 that, give or take.

23 MR. COOPER: When you look at those
24 numbers of bed bugs can live a year to a year and
25 a half, those are the extreme cases. Those are

1
2 what the potential is. The typical of what you
3 would expect in a typical residence in the city,
4 summer or winter it doesn't matter. I would say
5 that on average bugs are going to live somewhere
6 between four to six months. Some are going to die
7 sooner, some will live longer but anything less
8 than six months you're really at a lot of risk.

9 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: You
10 had mentioned as far as one of the ways, and I've
11 heard this, that these portable air dryers which
12 throw out a lot of heat. Using that, people are
13 trying to do stuff themselves overall to rid their
14 apartment. What's your opinion on that?

15 MR. COOPER: It certainly can and
16 will help. Sometimes you blow the smaller bed bug
17 nymphs off site. How are you holding it? Are you
18 drying your fingers and hurting them at the same
19 time? There are many tools. Irons can be
20 employed on mattresses. That's why I said
21 education and thinking and mapping this whole
22 thing out is a tremendous thing before us.

23 MR. BLOOM: I just want to add, all
24 these tools can work but the problem is it's not
25 as simple as taking out a hair dryer. Because

1
2 maybe at the outside it may be 150 degrees, three
3 inches away down a crack it's only 90 degrees, now
4 you're just going to blow them around. You're
5 giving them a nice sauna. People read online that
6 a hair dryer works and you're really exacerbating
7 the problem so you can't be too quick to throw out
8 these little makeshift potentially effective
9 tools.

10 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: That's
11 why I guess it's important to contact experts in
12 the field on this particular matter and let them
13 handle it. As you indicated, all of you have
14 indicated, the most important aspect overall is to
15 educate the public on this particular matter.

16 MR. BLOOM: Yes. Education is key.
17 There is official educational channels, there are
18 some blogs that give out good information also.
19 Some give out good, some give out bad. If you can
20 centralize that education so that it's correct,
21 disseminating from the Department of Health, that
22 becomes a great tool.

23 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Let me
24 ask a bottom line question, we have Intro 57,
25 Intro 872 and Intro 873. I think you have five

1
2 different representatives here of various
3 companies or associations. Do you support the
4 three Intros, yes or no. Let's go down so I can
5 get an understanding. From Mr. Bloom from the New
6 York State Pest Management Association, yes or no.
7 I'm not looking for a long winded answer.

8 MR. BLOOM: Intro 52, we would
9 support lobbying New York State licensing division
10 for stronger mattress requirements. Intro 872, no
11 comment. Intro 57, we do strongly support the
12 implementation of the bed bug task force and
13 that's part of it. Intro 872, we feel there
14 should be increased education. We feel the
15 Department is not capable of educating pest
16 control management.

17 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Next
18 individual, your company or whatever.

19 MR. ISENBERG: Jeff Isenberg, Pest
20 Away Exterminating, we are in favor of all three
21 pieces although some need more stress than others.
22 I don't want to give them all the same weight but
23 yes, they all would be effective.

24 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay.
25 And if you can submit something in writing as to

1
2 the little specifics of each one that would be
3 really good. Next, I'm sorry.

4 MR. COOPER: Richard Cooper, as an
5 independent expert, I support the task force and
6 Intro 57. I don't think the other legislation as
7 proposed--I would not support it as written.

8 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: That's
9 good, thank you I appreciate that. Next, if you
10 don't mind sir.

11 MR. WONG: Tim Wong from M & M Pest
12 Control, I do support all three bills except
13 obviously it's not as simple as it sounds. The
14 implementation of each of these bills has to be
15 carefully examined and reviewed before its
16 implemented.

17 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Next,
18 sir.

19 MR. WENK: Timothy Wenk from Shafer
20 Glazer, I support all three laws with the caveat
21 of I don't understand the sale of reconditioned
22 mattresses. I know mattresses can be very
23 expensive and I don't know whether the city is
24 buying used mattresses and using them in some of
25 their facilities, whether it's going to drive up

1
2 the taxes or what the economics of reconditioned
3 mattresses are. I don't know enough about the
4 sale but certainly I think a bed bug task force
5 should be formed and we should get more
6 information. Get a plan together, ASAP.

7 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank
8 you very much.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Just very
10 quickly, this is a small item. Obviously when I
11 order a mattress, a company comes, they deliver it
12 and they kindly take away my old mattress. There
13 is some concern that when they take it away there
14 are mingling in the truck. Is that something that
15 you've heard of? Should we address it? Again,
16 this is not the biggest issue but it's something.
17 I'm trying to chip away at the different places
18 where this task force could be helpful.

19 MR. BLOOM: It's certainly an issue
20 simply because by definition you're taking an
21 infested mattress, putting it into a truck with
22 brand new mattresses. Even though they are
23 wrapped to some degree but they're not completely
24 impervious to bed bug entry. All delivery trucks
25 for that matter, moving trucks, we found them in

1
2 all these situations. So it's definitely an
3 issue. There are protocols we have when a new
4 mattress is delivered, we insist on immediately
5 wrapping those mattresses before they enter an
6 apartment. They should be wrapped properly before
7 they enter into a truck that's being hauled away.
8 It's certainly an issue, no question about it.

9 MR. ISENBERG: I worked developing
10 protocols for a large mattress company. They do
11 have the right to refuse an infested mattress at
12 the point of pick up if they find it to be
13 infested. In theory an infested mattress is
14 wrapped, placed inside a cardboard box and put on
15 a separate side of the truck - in theory. And in
16 theory it's offloaded each night so that it
17 doesn't sit unless the truck gets back late.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: It's
19 something to look at then, thank you very much.

20 MR. COOPER: I've heard specific
21 stories of people who have bought new mattresses
22 that came with bed bugs.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: We've
24 gotten those calls also.

25 MR. COOPER: I'm sure you have.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: I'm going to
3 sound like a broken record. Is there a list of
4 any certified organizations or qualified
5 organizations that consumers can look on their web
6 site that has a real list that people can find?

7 MR. BLOOM: No. As we said all
8 pest control operators are licensed collectively
9 by the Department of Environmental Conservation.
10 There is a category 7A, which is structural and
11 rodent, under which bed bugs do fall and are
12 included in the manual. There are tests and
13 questions included on the exams in regard to that.
14 Further additional proficiency, there are
15 different associations that offer different
16 courses. Bed bug training and what's going on and
17 control is ever changing. From month to month,
18 from year to year new methods come out and they're
19 tried, different studies are spoken about in
20 various entomological symposiums. It disseminates
21 down to people that want to be efficient. Like in
22 any industry, there are people who want better and
23 those that are worse at what they do.

24 As with any industry, people need
25 to research. Are they members of associations?

1 HEALTH, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND SANITATION 51
2 What's the longevity of them being in business?

3 There really isn't any list. One of our issues
4 with the Department of Health training people was
5 even if they did that, how long would it take to
6 train the thousand or so companies that there are
7 in New York.

8 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: If I'm calling
9 a company up as an individual, what questions
10 should I ask that is verifiable that they are
11 qualified to deal with this.

12 MR. BLOOM: Everybody is staffed by
13 a certified pest control applicator, which is a
14 senior license. You can ask, are your technicians
15 applicators or your technicians as defined by law?
16 How long have you been in business? Do you do bed
17 bug jobs? Sometimes it's a matter of referral and
18 recommendation, as with any company.

19 MR. ISENBERG: If I could just
20 qualify, earlier today somebody spoke. Not all
21 pest control technicians are actually certified or
22 licensed. The law is that only one person in the
23 company needs to be certified and the rest can
24 work under their license. In our company, our
25 protocol is that everybody is licensed and

1 certifies. But at most companies all it takes is
2 one person. I've seen companies 22 people large
3 and only the owner who doesn't even do the work is
4 licensed. This is part of the educational process
5 in trying to get the caliper of the technicians up
6 just a bit. Show more of a commitment to the
7 industry if at least taking 40 hour course and
8 taking a test.
9

10 MR. WONG: On the flip side, the
11 termite industry for instance, if you wanted to be
12 a termite applicator you have to have a separate
13 7C category, a separate exam in order to be
14 qualified to buy termiticide or to treat termites.
15 If you're looking for somebody to treat your home
16 for termites you would look for technician or an
17 applicator who is licensed in that category.

18 Even in the termite industry, it's
19 tough. You are going to find applicators or
20 exterminators who are not qualified to treat
21 termites and they're still out there doing it.
22 Even if you regulate the industry you still need
23 to have education because it's the consumer who is
24 going to have to ask the right question and get
25 the right sense of who they are talking to in

1
2 terms of what they're buying. Even with the
3 license and the regulation and the training, it
4 doesn't guarantee that the person you're hiring is
5 going to be able to do it.

6 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Thank you.
7 Seeing no other questions, thank you very much
8 gentlemen. I'm ready to call up the next panel.
9 Again, we're going to put on the three minute
10 clock because we are running very late into the
11 hearing and we have a few more panels. This is a
12 panel consisting of Ray Lopez, the LSA Family
13 Health Service Inc, Renee Corea from New York
14 Versus Bed Bugs and Allen Schnelman from Farmo
15 Solomon and Schnelman and CS and Limas Forte from
16 We Act for the Environmental Justice and Yolande
17 Cadore from We Act for Environmental Justice.
18 Just for the record I am actually itching right
19 now. I'm going to state the names again, Yolande
20 Cadore, Limas Forte, Allen Schnelman, Renee Corea
21 and Ray Lopez. If you're not here raise your
22 hands. Whoever wants to start first.

23 ALLEN SCHNELMR. SOTO: I'm Allen
24 Schnelman. I'm a lawyer, I'm with the Fairmo,
25 Soloman and Schelman. We represent the victims od

1
2 bed bugs. These photographs which you see is just
3 a victim who is a victim here in a hotel. A
4 little different than Dr. Sorkin testified, when
5 you're bitten by bed bugs and if you're bitten by
6 hundreds of bites. Each bite leaves a little
7 saliva and what happens is you get a reaction from
8 hundreds of bites; it's cumulative. These photos,
9 as you can see, of over 500 bed bug bites at a
10 hotel. You could just imagine what the victim
11 feels. We have cases in hotels, apartments,
12 offices, cruise ships, even college dormitories.

13 When we first began litigating bed
14 bug cases, it was the joke. Don't let the bed bug
15 bite, sleep tight. Well it's not a joke anymore.
16 I'm thrilled that people are realizing this. The
17 injuries that arise from bed bug bites is by far
18 no joke. What happens is many of these scarrings,
19 these are legions, they scar and people are left
20 with scars for the rest of their lives. We have
21 clients who are hospitalized, especially
22 asthmatics, which go into almost respiratory
23 arrest sometimes from the bed bugs.

24 Many of our clients have post
25 traumatic syndrome. You can imagine when you get

1 bit by hundreds of bites what you're left with.
2 What about those people who have to travel
3 professional and are bitten? I have clients when
4 they travel they go with magnifying glasses and
5 look through and pull up the sheets. The mere
6 fact that a hotel, the lodging industry really
7 must be brought to bare. There must be
8 legislation that at least the housekeeper has it
9 on her list to inspect every single day for bed
10 bugs. When they find it they have to close the
11 room and they have to close the rooms on either
12 side. Because as we all know bed bugs travel.

14 I have photos of people who have
15 been evicted from their apartments here, rent
16 stabilized, rent controlled. You talk about bags.
17 Look at people, after they put their clothing.
18 These are their life's possessions because of bed
19 bugs. I have pictures of what bed bugs look like.
20 People take their pictures, the victims take the
21 pictures of what they are.

22 Mattresses, bed bugs in a mattress.
23 Furniture, look at bed bugs in furniture.
24 Thousands of bed bugs and you get evicted from
25 your home. I'm thrilled that there's legislation.

1
2 I'm thrilled that there will be a task force to
3 represent the people and to put a stop to this
4 program.

5 I have to tell you in the beginning
6 I would get some calls. Now I get calls and
7 emails every single day from all over the country.
8 We handle cases all over. The landlords, the
9 hotels, the entire industries, they're responsible
10 and we've held them liable and responsible.

11 YOLANDE CADORE: Good afternoon, my
12 name is Yolande Cadore. I'm the organizing
13 director at We Act for Environmental Justice,
14 which is an environmental justice organization
15 serving communities of color in New York City. We
16 are in support of all three proposed bills.

17 The first Intro 873-A our only
18 recommendation there is that with the development
19 of whatever training, it should be taken into
20 consideration that in some of the communities
21 where bed bugs extermination would be happening
22 are some of the communities with some of the
23 highest asthma rates also. So really take a look
24 at IPM and ways to use the less toxic pesticides
25 in getting rid of bed bugs. What we see is

1
2 residents who are calling us saying we have bed
3 bugs but my child also has asthma. When the
4 exterminator is coming in and he's spraying things
5 all over the place, it's protecting my health but
6 it's also destroying the health of some of the
7 most susceptible folks in my family.

8 Also, in terms of Intro 57, we
9 support it in spirit. We think that there is a
10 socio-economic issue here where people are not
11 choosing to buy reused mattresses. It's because
12 that's what they can afford. Although there is
13 going to be a ban on the resale on those
14 mattresses, there is no mention here if it's
15 banned then the folks are going to go to charity
16 stores to get them. How do you then mandate or
17 regulate Goodwill and all of these other reused
18 centers that are distributing mattresses?

19 We also support the fact that you
20 definitely need to call on the state to strengthen
21 their legislation around how mattresses are
22 sanitized. Again, looking at the pesticides issue
23 because in the communities that we serve, as I
24 mentioned before, these are the communities that
25 are already at risk, already suffering the highest

1
2 asthma rates and we don't want another burden to
3 be placed on them.

4 RENEÉ COREA: Good afternoon, my
5 name is Renee Corea. I am a co-founder of New
6 York Versus Bed Bugs, which is a policy advocacy
7 group that was formed in March of 2008. We were
8 inspired by the actions that two cities in
9 particular took to address the problem of bed
10 bugs, Cincinnati and Toronto.

11 In light of the long afternoon and
12 the fact that we've already heard, the
13 administration representatives speak earlier and
14 it looks like we are going to have a task force.
15 I would simply like to make a brief point and
16 highlight the items that we want the task force to
17 focus on. I was both thrilled and a little
18 concerned when I heard the representatives.

19 The task force should hit the
20 ground running. That's why we need a task force.
21 They need to begin work immediately. These are
22 some of the things that Toronto already has, for
23 example they have about half a dozen places where
24 people can bring in a bed bug for ID. They have a
25 single centralized telephone number that people

1
2 can call for any bed bug question at all. They
3 have a very comprehensive web site with specific
4 information addressed to different audiences for
5 pest control professionals for health workers.
6 Those key workers in our society that are exposed
7 to bed bugs in their work, sanitation workers,
8 social workers. They have, of course as Council
9 Member Brewer noted, a fact sheet for citizens
10 that is translated into 13 languages.

11 We want to see the task force
12 address these problems quickly. We need to
13 disseminate information to New Yorkers
14 immediately. And we also want the task force to
15 measure the scope of the problem so that we can
16 direct pest control resources to these areas.
17 Because although there were more than 9,000
18 official 3-1-1 complaints received in fiscal year
19 2008, there were only a little more than 5,000
20 inspections carried out by HPD. So 4,000
21 complaints were uninspected.

22 The story is even more dire with
23 the New York City Housing Authority statistics.
24 In one single housing development in Manhattan,
25 there were 56 complaints in fiscal year 2008 and

1
2 only 16 treatments. 16 treatments and each
3 complaint should be serviced, according to their
4 own policy, by three treatments. The problem is
5 growing and we're not addressing it correctly.
6 The point that I want to make is that in the
7 national debate about whether bed bugs are a
8 public health concern, what has been overlooked is
9 that they are already deemed a pest of significant
10 public health importance by the federal
11 government. They have been on this list of pests
12 of significant public health importance since
13 2002. We've recently learned that the U.S.
14 Environmental Protection Agency is planning a two
15 day bed bug conference in April. So the public
16 health interest is extremely clear - it's obvious.

17 We understand that the city has
18 grappled with this before but now is the time to
19 really address the problem. I just want to
20 address a couple of things that were raised about
21 the mattresses.

22 One thing that is overlooked that
23 mattresses are not only sold to consumers but
24 they're sold to institutional consumers, to
25 nursing homes. The problem can be magnified and

1
2 it may be a small facet of the entire problem that
3 we have in our cit with bed bugs. But this is
4 exactly what it takes to reduce the numbers. You
5 have to look at every single thing that is
6 creating or furthering the spread.

7 If the reconditioned mattresses are
8 part of the problem we need to have a policy for
9 them and we can't wait for the state to issue
10 regulations. We should act. That's why we
11 support Intro 57 in its entirety. I'm done.
12 Thanks.

13 RAY LOPEZ: Good afternoon
14 everyone, my name is Ray Lopez and I'm the
15 Director of the Environmental Health program at
16 Little Sisters of the Assumption Family Health
17 Service, which is a not for profit based in East
18 Harlem. My program has existed for more than ten
19 years. We've worked in the homes of more than 800
20 families living in housing conditions that
21 negatively effect their health and well being.

22 The objective of our program has
23 always been to train residents on ways that they
24 can safely and effectively improve air quality in
25 their apartments or reducing their exposure to

1
2 infestations, pesticides, mold growth, harsh
3 chemicals and a long list of other conditions and
4 behaviors that can trigger asthma or have other
5 detrimental health effects.

6 Our program successes the result of
7 building relationships with our families to
8 understand the barriers that prevent them from
9 achieving improved health and well being. When we
10 assess an apartment, we're careful too delineate
11 the responsibilities that the tenants have in
12 terms of whatever issue it is and what the
13 property manager's responsible for. We've had a
14 lot of success assisting one family at a time.
15 We've also tried to encourage them to speak up, to
16 communicate with other residents and to building
17 managers.

18 In terms of bed bugs, we've been in
19 about 250 units and we've really just tried to
20 teach the families themselves how to identify a
21 bed bug problem and how to do the work themselves
22 in the short term because we really have a
23 difficult time in East Harlem getting building
24 managers to respond in any way. If they do
25 respond it's very reactionary. They, many times,

1
2 blame the tenant for the problem. In other
3 instances, they have the super treat the apartment
4 with products purchased in a hardware store or
5 they hire the most inexpensive pest control
6 company. Many times these companies only will
7 treat the apartment that reports the problem and
8 they ignore the rest of the building.

9 I support all three introductions
10 but I do see there are a few things lacking in
11 those three introductions. The first thing I'd
12 like to see that Renee touched upon that there
13 should be a better accounting and dissemination of
14 data so that the public can understand the
15 magnitude of the problem.

16 Second, I think that the city
17 should vigorously promote integrated pest
18 management in all their own buildings. I think
19 that this would compel more pest control companies
20 to adopt comprehensive services. Third, I think
21 that there should be increased assistance for
22 seniors and disabled people who are unable to
23 manage their own situations. I think that the
24 most important piece is a large scale educational
25 campaign towards residents.

1
2 The last thing that I want to say
3 is that at Little Sisters, we've been waiting a
4 long time for something to happen city wide. In
5 the meantime, we've done whatever we can to help
6 people be proactive. And with the help with
7 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Award, Little
8 Sisters will continue our bed bug work and will
9 continue to train tenants to reach out to building
10 managers and to set up our own curriculum to get
11 the problem under control in our own neighborhood.

12 We hope to engage our whole
13 community and we'd like to serve as a model that
14 can be replicated in other neighborhoods. The
15 objective of that curriculum would be for us to
16 set up a co-operative that is run by people in the
17 community themselves. It's a work force
18 development program. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Are there any
20 questions.

21 Council Member: There's one more
22 person.

23 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: I apologize
24 about that.

25 LIMAS FORTE: Yes, I'm here with my

1
2 colleague Yolande Cadore. My name is Limas Forte,
3 I'm the Healthy Homes Program Manager for We Act
4 for Environmental Justice. I'd like to thank the
5 Speaker, the committee, Chairpersons and the
6 members of City Council for addressing this very
7 serious public health problem that bed bugs have
8 become in our city.

9 We support the proposed measures
10 and we think more should be done to stem the tide
11 of the current infestation. For over 20 years, We
12 Act fought to bring about systemic change that
13 ensures improvement of the environment and health
14 of low income people of color. We come before the
15 Council today to discuss our concerns over the
16 rising bed bug epidemic in our communities.

17 It will come as no surprise to many
18 Council Members that low income residents are
19 often among the top consumers of used mattresses
20 and bed frames, the preferred habitats of bed bugs
21 and the targets of the bills before us today.
22 Although they do not harbor or transmit infectious
23 diseased agents, bed bugs are nevertheless a major
24 public and environmental health concern.

25 Repeated exposure to bed bug bites

1
2 causes victims to become sensitized to the bed
3 bugs saliva so that subsequent bites could result
4 in intense allergic responses, which include
5 persistent welts, itchiness and swelling. The
6 social stigma of having bed bugs and the
7 frustration of endlessly fruitless battles against
8 the insects can deteriorate the mental health of
9 bed bug sufferers and their families.

10 We fully support Intro 873-A and
11 Intro 872. We urge the development of training
12 programs for bed bug exterminators to promote
13 integrative pest management protocols and to
14 emphasize that because of their toxicity,
15 pesticide use should be an action of last resort.
16 We also recommend that the city work with state
17 leasers to improve existing mattress
18 reconditioning rules and ensure their enforcement.

19 Although we support Intro 57 in
20 spirit, we believe that ensuring proper treatment
21 of used mattresses and furnishings against bed
22 bugs will retain an important source of bedding
23 for low income residents. It would also be
24 consistent with the city's sustainability
25 initiatives by reducing the volume of waste going

1
2 to landfills and incinerators or other waste
3 disposal facilities.

4 We Act is grateful to have this
5 opportunity to comment on the very important suite
6 of legislation. We stand ready to assist the
7 Council in whatever way necessary to protect the
8 public health of New York City residents,
9 particularly those from low income communities of
10 color. Thank you.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you.
12 Rea, I have a question. I'm sorry, I had to step
13 out for a minute but when you are working with the
14 community that you're talking about, you had also
15 discussed perhaps thinking of this as a profession
16 in terms of people being trained to do what you
17 do. Is that something that you are pursuing in
18 terms of job creation?

19 MR. LOPEZ: Yes. Starting in June,
20 I'll begin a project through the Robert Wood
21 Johnson Foundation's Community Health Leaders.
22 I've been awarded \$105,000 for a two year project
23 that I will use to develop our own curriculum
24 locally so that we can reach out to tenants, train
25 them. We haven't set up the mechanism yet but

1
2 we'll either have them trained and be able to
3 assist other tenants in preparing their apartments
4 and taking the control of bed bugs as far as they
5 can. Then have them coordinate with building
6 manager and exterminators.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you.

8 I think I said this earlier but Renee has been the
9 life savior for many of us on this topic so I just
10 want to publicly thank Renee Corea.

11 MS. COREA: Thank you Council
12 Member.

13 [Applause]

14 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: We'll try to
15 get everybody out of here by 5:30, 6:00 if we
16 possibly can. Next one will be Courtney Taray
17 from My Family, Lisa Arkis representing herself,
18 Maryland Little, again representing herself and
19 Enid Farber. If you have nay testimony to provide
20 to us, you can give it to the Sergeant of Arms and
21 she will... Again we're calling Enid Farber,
22 Maryland Little, Lisa Arkis, I hope I pronounced
23 it correctly and Courtney Taray. So Courtney
24 Taray, Lisa Arkis, Maryland Little and Enid
25 Farber.

1
2 COURTNEY TARAY: Hi, I'm Courtney
3 Taray and I thank you for the opportunity to speak
4 today. My pictures will be coming down through
5 the pike here. I stand or sit before you here
6 today as one of the thousands of New Yorkers whose
7 life has been traumatized by a bed bug
8 infestation.

9 My oldest son, age 7, was bitten
10 for three months before we knew we had bed bugs.
11 We took him to three different doctors over a
12 period of three months and each of them told us he
13 had allergic hives. Even when I asked two of them
14 about the hives presenting in straight little
15 lines, which is a tell tale sign of bed bugs
16 bites, they shrugged it off and never once
17 considered the potential of bed bugs.

18 It was through a long series of
19 events that I became aware that my building had an
20 infestation and we were not the first to have
21 them. I fully believe they came up from the floor
22 boards from my neighbor below us who had them
23 prior to our infestation. They had them in the
24 same room that we had them in, which was where my
25 three children slept. The exterminator would

1
2 later tell me, and I quote "Doctors don't know.
3 They misdiagnose this problem all the time." From
4 my anecdotal experience in talking to and
5 researching other people's experiences, I can
6 assure you that this is true.

7 I am here because this has had a
8 near devastating impact on my family. The
9 emotional toll was immense. Before the
10 exterminators would even agree to give me my first
11 treatment I had to inspect and then pack up my
12 entire apartment in sealed plastic bags and
13 containers. With three small children to care for
14 and a husband who is in London for ten weeks, the
15 task was almost too much for me to bear.

16 Allow yourselves to just stop a
17 moment and ponder, what would that be like to pack
18 up every item you own and seal it in plastic for
19 an indefinite time period. The anguish of putting
20 my children to bed in a room that I knew had bed
21 bugs, knowing that they would be at risk of being
22 bitten was almost more than I could take. I was
23 told that if I moved them, the bed bugs would only
24 spread to the rest of the apartment.

25 Can you imagine putting your

1
2 children to bed each night knowing they would be
3 covered with bed bugs before morning's arrival?
4 That was back on November 17th. Three months
5 later we are still living out of plastic bags, not
6 using our dressers or closets. We're about 70%
7 packed up in bags. There are bags everywhere
8 filled with our belongings. We're not living a
9 normal life in our apartment. My children don't
10 have friends over to play, their toys are packed
11 up. When neighbors come by they stop at the front
12 door. It's as much their choice as it is mine.

13 We ate our meals on the kitchen
14 floor for several weeks because we had no where
15 else to put bags of our belongings except stack
16 them in the kitchen, which is where the
17 exterminators told us to put them. They block the
18 table, the hallway, the foyer. At one point when
19 my floors had to be resealed, the entire eat in
20 kitchen was so full of bags you could not enter
21 the kitchen. The simplest of tasks became a
22 challenge.

23 Because our infestation went
24 undetected for so long, we were forced to throw
25 away our children's bunk bed and mattresses. They

1 still sleep on army cots that we bought at Wal-
2 Mart. The financial toll did not stop there.
3 Money we spent on plastic bags, laundry detergent,
4 laundry mat costs, other supplies including a
5 night in a hotel because our floors didn't get
6 finished in time to dry before we had to go to bed
7 ran us into the hundreds of dollars. In the end,
8 it would probably be upwards of \$1,000. I have
9 still have not been able to finished the laundry
10 that is packed up three months later. If the
11 emotional aspect of this was not stressful enough,
12 the financial toll certainly was.

14 Most people do not know their legal
15 rights and their responsibilities as tenants or
16 sub-letters and they do not know what steps to
17 take once they suspect an infestation. People
18 have a stigma of being filthy and unkempt attached
19 to being infested with bed bugs. Another source
20 of concern is that tenants have no rights, or so
21 I'm told, when it comes to finding out what is
22 going on in other apartments. The lady who lives
23 above me has had bed bugs since July, she told me.
24 She is just now deciding to get something done.
25 She is putting my entire family and the rest of

1
2 our building at risk and yet there is nothing I
3 can do.

4 Everyone here is familiar with the
5 If You See Something Say Something signs
6 throughout New York City's mass transit
7 facilities. I believe bed bugs deserve the same
8 type of awareness campaign. New York City is
9 failing to realize how uneducated the public I son
10 this issue. It's cliché but education is the
11 first step. People need to know they are not
12 alone, they need to know where to turn for help.
13 They need to know if their landlord is legally
14 responsible for the cost of the extermination
15 treatments, having the floors resealed, walls
16 closed up. And they need to know where to turn if
17 they see bed bugs on the subway or in other public
18 areas. They need to know that bed bugs do not
19 discriminate based on cleanliness.

20 I applaud you for your proposed
21 legislation and I would like to encourage you to
22 think in even broader terms. You need to give the
23 public a fighting chance against this horrible
24 deal. I have two more comments and I know I'm
25 over.

CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Okay.

MS. TARAY: I take issue with the Department of Health recommendation to inspect property for their bed bugs. If I had not had a professional inspection, I would not have known that I have bed bugs; they're not always just in plain site.

I also take issue and think that it defies all logic to tell people not to seal up their furniture that they're discarding. If I had not sealed up my bunk bed as we took it down to the curb, I could have spread bed bugs all through my whole building. So I think that is absolutely ridiculous. I spoke to the Department of Sanitation. They seem more interested in protecting the scavengers resell than they are about protecting the rest of the tenants who are just innocent bystanders.

About the bags from the government, I assure you that I would not have waited for a bag to arrive in the mail to get rid of my bunk bed. The day they came for the first treatment, they looked at the bunk bed. They said sorry, this is not salvageable. I got the tools out

1 right then and there and started taking it apart.
2 I was not going to wait for a bag to arrive in the
3 mail to seal it up. Thank you very much for your
4 time.
5

6 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Thank you.

7 LISA ARKIS: My name is Lisa Arkis.
8 In August of 2007 my husband and I took turns cat
9 sitting for a neighbor across the hall. Little
10 did anyone know that she lived directly above what
11 we would discover had been a severely infested
12 apartment. While cat sitting for her, I got
13 mysterious skin conditions and one night I saw
14 bugs crawling on the wall behind her couch. I
15 went home after seeing that and about one hour of
16 Googling it became clear to me that she had bed
17 bugs, that we could now have them, that they were
18 challenging to eradicate and they spread easily.

19 After discovering that the problem
20 had spread further and the landlord was not doing
21 anything to halt the spread, we formed a tenant's
22 association. We discovered that the sister
23 building next door, a building with which we share
24 a broiler and is owned by the same landlord, had
25 an extensive infestation in 2006. After seeing

1
2 how a bed bug infestation can spread like wild
3 fire the landlord still did nothing to prevent the
4 bed bugs from spreading in our building. They did
5 not inform tenants of the problem nor did they
6 inspect adjoining units. They would only treat
7 apartments as tenants became infested and informed
8 the landlord, one unit at a time.

9 After some lengthy discussions with
10 the landlord's exterminator and relaying his
11 recommendations to the landlord, the landlord
12 simply refused to implement most of those
13 suggestions. In desperation, I wrote to the
14 landlord's PCO and implored him to educate the
15 landlord. The result of that was that the
16 landlord now required all questions for the PCO to
17 be routed through the landlord's office.
18 Basically we were not allowed to call the
19 exterminator.

20 When a tenant tried to speak
21 directly to the PCO, our calls were not put
22 through. When I asked the landlord to implement
23 one of the PCO's recommendations, which by the way
24 was the sealing of the wooden floors, they
25 refused. I offered to do it myself. They

1
2 refused. Finally the only way they would grant me
3 permission was if I promised to never sue them for
4 bed bugs.

5 Only through the tenants' efforts
6 to eliminate harborages and seal our own
7 apartments and organizing as best as we could
8 everybody's treatment schedules, was the building
9 wide infestation brought under control. By this
10 time, however it had spread to 14 apartments, half
11 the building. There were two rather intractable
12 infestations that lasted for a year and a half and
13 ours was one of them.

14 The Housing Maintenance code
15 clearly states that the landlord is responsible
16 for dealing with this problem. It has been the
17 consensus for years that the protocol for
18 addressing bed bugs must include addressing
19 adjoining units. Our landlord and PCO did not do
20 that in spite of the fact that they knew all too
21 well what could happen. Why? Was it because they
22 were short sided and tried to spend as little as
23 possible? Or as almost the entire third floor
24 moved, were they reaping the benefits of a lot of
25 turnover and rising rents?

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2 In fact, we know that a few tenants
3 that moved into the building and were not informed
4 of the ongoing problem and subsequently became
5 infested themselves. We also know of someone who
6 moved into an already infested apartment. I
7 called my Council Member and State Assemblyman,
8 nobody could help.

9 As a last resort, seven months into
10 our infestation we called 3-1-1 hoping to force
11 action from the landlord. We have been fearful to
12 do this because at one point we had called HPD and
13 spoken with the Chief Inspector regarding what
14 constituted acceptable bed bug evidence. He said
15 that you need to see bed bugs or the eggs. I
16 pointed out that even at the HPD seminar they
17 talked about how bed bugs hide and how difficult
18 they are to find. I told him I can show him my
19 dead bug freezer collection, I could show him
20 blood stains on my sheets, my pillow cases and
21 even my pajamas. I could show him my bites. And
22 his response was you got to show us their nests--

23 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: [interposing]

24 If you can sum up, please.

25 MS. ARKIS: They lay eggs, you got

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2 to show us where they lay their eggs. My husband
3 called and spoke with another inspector at one
4 point and it seemed that this person would deem
5 fecal spotting on a mattress as acceptable. We in
6 fact had fecal spotting on an encasement where
7 there had been a breach at one point. In
8 desperation and beyond being fed up, I called 3-1-
9 1 at 2:30 in the morning and reported our
10 infestation.

11 The inspector showed up at 10:00 am
12 and we showed him the fecal spotting on the
13 encasement. He said no, no. It's got to be on
14 the mattress. You have to take off the
15 encasement. Horrified, I said you want us to take
16 this off and risk letting lose what's contained in
17 there. He said, you know they live on the tucks
18 and the seams. I got to see the mattress. So I
19 thanked him and I said no thank you. On his way
20 out, he cited a violation unrelated to bed bugs.

21 We had a storage unit built in the
22 second bedroom because we had no closets.
23 Apparently that was against the law, that was the
24 violation. I know I'm over. I don't know if I
25 should go on.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Could you
3 please sum up?

4 MS. ARKIS: If you've never had a
5 bed bug infestation, there is just no way you can
6 grasp the breadth of what that feels like. The
7 sheer terror and out of control anxiety simply
8 getting into bed at night induces is hard to
9 describe. I have to take medication just to get
10 into bed at night. We think we're in the clear
11 now. We hired a private person. Even though I
12 think we're okay, I still take medication to go to
13 bed at night, just the idea that insects are going
14 to be crawling on me and feeding on me puts my
15 entire nervous system in overdrive.

16 The cheapest thing that can be done
17 immediately is for a landlord to be aggressively
18 proactive in a preventive way. Apartments can be
19 sealed before there are problems, just for
20 starters. I'll just stop there. I can't really
21 think any more.

22 ENID FARBER: Mine is really pretty
23 short. I will just preface, I am going to say
24 that what I wrote, which is three short paragraphs
25 last week around this time--

1
2 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: [interposing]
3 What's your name again, ma'am?

4 MS. FARBER: Sorry, Enid Farber, F-
5 A-R-B-E-R. My infestation was last November and
6 I'm still dealing with it. As I'm sitting here
7 today they're finally repairing cracks in my
8 walls, which was the only violation that HPD
9 issued. They didn't even write up the bed bug
10 problem, they just issued a violation for cracks.
11 It's a charade; the whole HPD matter. They under
12 reported completely. Anyway I wrote what I wrote
13 because a friend of mine in Jersey City called me
14 and said now his building is infested.

15 To make a very long story short,
16 his landlord is not only paying for them to live
17 in another apartment while they're going nuclear
18 on the building, he's replacing everything at his
19 cost. They are being exempt from paying their
20 rent until this is taken care of. He's doing the
21 right thing. I'm saying that because my landlord
22 and most slum lords in New York City refuse to do
23 the right thing.

24 I am in financial ruin. I have no
25 resources, no one to turn to. I'm not a person of

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2 color that can go anywhere and ask for help, sorry
3 to say. I'm a low income person. I'm a freelance
4 jazz photographer and I don't work right now. I'm
5 in total financial ruin yet I have to keep paying
6 my rent which was jacked up \$200 because of the
7 rent increase and because of an illegal MCI
8 increase, which I couldn't find because no one in
9 my building will organize.

10 So ditto for everything that they
11 expressed. Everything that they said I have been
12 through that since November and I'm still going
13 through that. I'm totally insecure and living on
14 an air mattress for three months not getting sleep
15 the whole day. The only difference is no one in
16 my building, six other tenants apartments, they
17 don't want to have anything to do with any of
18 this. They're all afraid of the landlord.

19 I am clear where the infestation
20 came from. I had major cracks in my walls; it
21 looked like an earthquake. They came in because
22 two disgusting apartments were completely
23 renovated on my floor. You've never seen
24 conditions like this in your life. The restaurant
25 below me, I live over a restaurant, was completely

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2 renovated. I have major cracks from those
3 renovations. I have people living above me that
4 are sharing, ten guys on mattresses all over the
5 floor. They took my old mattress. I bought a new
6 mattress two years ago, brand new thousand dollar
7 mattress. They took my old mattress and dragged
8 it up to my apartment.

9 Anyway, without blaming anyone
10 because we don't know where they come from. I'm
11 just telling you, setting that up. I wrote this:

12 I live in Hell's Kitchen and that
13 is an understatement. Right smack in the middle
14 of the center of the universe in New York City and
15 there are far too many of the millions who live
16 here that remain completely oblivious, uninformed
17 and unprepared for this dreadful epidemic. No, it
18 is not life threatening like AIDS but it is life
19 altering, disrupting and often reeks complete
20 havoc on lives that are not prepared for the
21 untenable situation being a victim inflicts upon
22 them.

23 Once it happens, no one knows what
24 to do, where to go, how to begin the process of
25 dealing. Some have had nervous breakdowns and

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2 others are on the verge. It is obvious and
3 somewhat understandable that New York City would
4 not want to expose this information as it might
5 undermine an already ravaged economy that is
6 partially dependent on tourism. But this is
7 highly unconscionable and I am mad as hell in
8 Hell's Kitchen.

9 I can not stand by idly. My life
10 has completely unraveled as are so many, due to a
11 bug that is not bigger in size than a seed but is
12 enormous in its scope to nearly destroy so many
13 lives. I appealing to you to ask fast. We need
14 these bills and we need to foster more
15 understanding and public awareness as has been
16 said today.

17 If you had not been personally
18 struck, your chances are high. You could be at
19 any time and there's no prevention as of yet. So
20 please move forward on education information and
21 do everything in your power to get this under
22 control before the whole city has to be
23 quarantined. I'm not going to take any more time
24 because I know I'm over time.

25 But if there is a bed bug task

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2 force, I made many notes based on what these
3 experts testified and there are so many places
4 where they're clueless, they're so clueless. For
5 instance, I threw out my mattress the minute I saw
6 that it had stains everywhere. After being bitten
7 for a month not knowing what it was. I was
8 scratching for a month thinking I was pre-
9 menopausal or peri-menopausal. I thought I just
10 have dry skin and I'm itching like crazy but it
11 turn out to be the bed bugs. When I found the
12 stains--

13 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: [interposing]
14 Could you sum up please.

15 MR. FARBER: I threw out my
16 mattress. You know what I did? I slashed it,
17 slashed it up because who has the resources and
18 the facility and the wherewithal to wrap it and do
19 all this stuff. Yes, that should be done but the
20 city has gotten to help in that. People that
21 don't have resources need help with whatever it
22 takes, financial resources and I can go on and on.
23 I slashed my mattress up, bed bugs on it, put it
24 on the street at 2:00 in the morning when it was
25 10 degrees and they came and picked it up and they

1
2 took it. That's no way to dispose of it but I was
3 desperate; I wanted it out of my apartment. I got
4 it out and that's what I had to do. Because what
5 else was I to do? Besides all the other furniture
6 and everything else I had to throw away so...

7 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Thank you.

8 MS. TARAY: Can I just add
9 something about the mattresses? There's so much
10 focus today on mattresses but to just put an
11 encasement over a mattress is not going to solve
12 the problem. My bunk bed had little holes for the
13 screws, you could adjust the height and stuff. So
14 the bed bugs had burrowed into those holes so I
15 could have encased the mattresses 40 times over
16 and the bugs would have come out of the bunk bed.

17 MR. FARBER: Yeah, my pillows even.

18 MS. TARAY: They're not going
19 to...just to tell people to encase their
20 mattresses I think that's very short sided. I
21 think you need to think in broader terms and I
22 think you need to make sure that people don't
23 think I'm safe from bed bugs now because my
24 mattress is encased.

25 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Do we have any

1
2 questions?

3 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I
4 agree with everything that's been said overall. I
5 clearly agree that it's not just the mattresses.
6 I have given, with HPD and the Department of
7 Health, workshops in northern Manhattan where I've
8 heard stories just like you are telling, where
9 they have hidden behind pictures, behind molding,
10 behind wallpaper, in the dresser drawers,
11 everywhere, everywhere. So unless an expert is
12 thoroughly examining everything, under the
13 baseboards and everything, the cracks in the wood
14 floor, anywhere they can hide.

15 It takes a real education on behalf
16 of all of the people involved, residents,
17 neighbors, landlords, everyone to be as
18 knowledgeable as possible. This is a continuous
19 battle, continuous battle. Just because you throw
20 out a mattress, throw out all your furniture, you
21 get new furniture, that doesn't mean anything.
22 They can still be there. It's a continuous battle
23 that has to be monitored on a continuous basis,
24 knowing what to do and how to get rid of them is
25 extremely, extremely important.

1
2 I can understand. I don't know if
3 you were here when I gave my opening testimony.
4 I've experienced bed bugs when we were kids and I
5 know what they feel like to be bitten at 2:00 or
6 3:00 in the morning. Wake up and start the search
7 and you find them crawling around. Or you find
8 where you've rolled over and squished one and the
9 blood and everything is on the bed sheets and what
10 have you. I remember those experiences when I was
11 young.

12 Even today, my wife is so fearful
13 of the fact that I may bring bed bugs in the
14 house. I tell her I can pick it up anywhere, I
15 can pick it up on the seat, I can pick it up on
16 the subway or anywhere else.

17 MS. FARBER: Which is why a buck
18 shot approach to this problem is necessary. Just
19 dealing with mattresses, I think that's one vital
20 aspect to the problem. Twice a week in my
21 neighborhood, on average, I see a mattress and a
22 box spring, sometimes a couch on a street. Within
23 a couple of hours they are simply gone. I called
24 3-1-1 because I was finally going to, after a year
25 I decided to throw a piano away. I didn't know

1
2 how to throw it away. How do I do that safely and
3 have somebody not take it?

4 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Was it
5 infested also or you don't know?

6 MS. FARBER: It's hard to know. I
7 was vacuuming in there but you need micro tools
8 and I had to move it to vacuum. Between my
9 husband and I we probably put in 400 hours of
10 vacuuming in the last year alone. It became too
11 time consuming and it was too much and I called
12 the city for help. How do I do this and protect
13 everybody, the New Yorkers so nobody takes it?
14 And there is nothing set in place.

15 Actually, just as an aside, the
16 first time I went to the landlord's PCO's office I
17 asked somebody there what about my neighbors. And
18 the response there was you don't have to tell
19 anybody. I said no, how do I protect my
20 neighbors? That's part of the problem.

21 MS. FARBER: I wrote a letter and
22 put it under everyone's door when it first
23 happened, before I even told the landlord because
24 I found it on a Friday night. So I put it under
25 everyone's door.

1
2 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Well,
3 that's good. That's good neighbor--

4 MS. FARBER: [interposing] But the
5 landlord was furious with me that I told the
6 neighbors.

7 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Of
8 course he was.

9 MS. FARBER: And he refuses to
10 inspect their apartments.

11 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: That's
12 where...One thing I disagree with you is that you
13 said that--I agree with everything you said except
14 the fact you said if you were a person of color
15 you would get different service and this--

16 MS. FARBER: [interposing] No, no,
17 no, no but--

18 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON:
19 [interposing] No, no, let me finish.

20 MS. FARBER: [interposing] The
21 testimony here was that--

22 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON:
23 [interposing] I understand that. Let me just
24 finish. I wasn't here for the testimony. I'm
25 sorry. I only heard your testimony.

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MS. FARBER: Thank you.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: And what I heard your testimony was that in essence you said if you were a person of color you may get help. This, in my opinion, has nothing to do with color whatsoever.

MS. FARBER: But there were just two organizations here that are helping people of color and that is very appropriate. But it's just there are people that aren't of color that are very low income like myself. My husband happens to be Mexican so he is of color but I haven't made him available. It's just I'm low income and there are no resources to deal with this period.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: That may be so but...

MS. FARBER: There are no resources, period.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I hear what you're saying and this is colorblind in my opinion.

MS. FARBER: Yes, right. But there needs to be resources for everyone.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: There

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is.

MS. FARBER: Where? What do I do?

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Robert I have a question.

MS. FARBER: What do I do? I can't get a bed; I'm sleeping on an air mattress. I can not afford a bed. My landlord will not pay for anything.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Robert I have a question when you're done.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Go ahead.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: What do you think in terms of the housing issue should be done? Obviously the courts are really tied up with these concerns, do you have any suggestions as to how we can handle some of them? Obviously some owners and I know some owners who are doing as you suggested, taking care of business and others are not. So I was just wondering what you think.

MS. FARBER: The laws are actually quite clear. The laws state that it's the landlord's responsibility to provide continuous

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2 eradication and remove harborages. It's stated in
3 the New York City Housing Maintenance Code. I
4 guess I throw the question back to you, how does
5 that get enforced? I don't know how it gets
6 enforced. I wound up going to court trying to get
7 my landlord to do something.

8 My husband and I have spent upwards
9 of \$20,000; between storage units, lawyers,
10 plastic, you name it. I'm not sure. The laws are
11 there so somebody has to-- who is responsible for
12 enforcing them? That's actually a good question.
13 What is the answer to that?

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: The answer
15 is like every other landlord tenant issue; it's
16 often not enforced and then we have to go to court
17 and we get inspections. Unfortunately it's not
18 just related to bed bugs. The other question I
19 have though is do you think, something that's not
20 done currently, the owner having the
21 responsibility of letting everyone know in the
22 building.

23 MS. FARBER: Absolutely and should
24 inspect every apartment.

25 MS. FARBER: Yes.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I would
3 agree with you. I'm just sort of asking
4 rhetorical questions. Then people would take the
5 stigma away. You're not responsible for telling
6 the neighbors but the owners would do so. A lot
7 of friends in co-ops have bed bugs now. To the
8 credit of the way in which the co-op is organized,
9 there is a note that goes out to everybody in the
10 building that somebody in the building has bed
11 bugs or the laundry room has bed bugs. We're
12 sending in the following exterminator who has the
13 following qualifications so on and so forth.

14 MS. FARBER: But in my case I did
15 all that. My problem is that no one in my
16 building is responding. It's unbelievable. They
17 are so complacent about everything. They don't do
18 anything about anything that's wrong in the
19 building.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I
21 understand.

22 MS. TARAY: But--I'm sorry.

23 MS. FARBER: I'm really clear that
24 probably this came from the apartment adjacent or
25 above. I'm not really clear, you can't be. But I

1 don't really travel, if I got one on the subway...
2
3 But they need to be inspected because now I've had
4 four treatments, three months. I can't even relax
5 enough to figure out what to do. What am I going
6 to sleep on the rest of my life? How am I going
7 to unpack my clothes and feel secure and get my
8 life back in order? We need to figure out how to-
9 -until they make it mandatory to inspect at least
10 the apartments around, there is no security. I
11 feel like in four months, six months or a year I'm
12 just going to wake up one morning again with the
13 same problem.

14 MS. TARAY: I would like to address
15 this issue also.

16 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: I'm sorry we
17 have one more panel and I just need to get to that
18 also.

19 MS. TARAY: My landlord told me
20 that he was taken to court to bed bugs and he won
21 and that he had no responsibility for it. In the
22 end he did end up paying for five treatments, a
23 dog inspection and the whole bit. But the lady
24 above me was a subletter and the exterminator
25 company, I don't know if anybody from the

1
2 companies are here. But they told me that the
3 subletters have no legal rights when it comes to
4 having a bed bug problem eradicated. I think that
5 if the law is out there, people need to know. As
6 I said in my statement, people need to know their
7 rights and their responsibilities when it comes
8 to--

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER:

10 [interposing] Time is of the essence. But I do
11 think the issue between owners and tenants needs
12 to be clarified. Even though it's the law we have
13 many, many calls coming in on this topic. It may
14 be clear in the law but it's not enforced
15 correctly.

16 MS. FARBER: Judges should be
17 informed and educated and all of that.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I mentioned
19 when I spoke, the courts are clogged with these
20 issues and that is part of the task force in my
21 opinion.

22 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Inez
23 Dickens, Council Member.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Thank you.
25 Also you had asked about help. We Act, although

1
2 is located in northern Manhattan, will go anywhere
3 to be of assistance to the citizens of New York.
4 They do not offer assistance based upon color.
5 Also New York Versus Bed Bugs which is not located
6 in northern Manhattan. So there are
7 organizations--

8 MS. COREA: [interposing] With all
9 due respect, New York Versus Bed Bugs, I'm
10 actually a co-founder of that, does not go and
11 inspect apartments.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: They won't
13 but they can give you information. That's what
14 I'm talking about. She's looking for assistance
15 and where she can go. I'm trying to give her some
16 options as to where she can go to get assistance.

17 MS. COREA: New York Versus Bed
18 Bugs is here to get a task force so there are
19 options for tenants to go. We all have jobs and
20 we do this--I was up until 5:00 in the morning
21 dealing with business regarding that group and
22 this testimony. I would love to return to my
23 life. I played the flute and I really rather play
24 the flute than read about bugs.

25 MS. FARBER: Maybe FEMA can be

1
2 involved in this because this is a FEMA issue.
3 We're in as bad of shape as anyone who has lost
4 their home form a natural disaster. Can you
5 appreciate that? There are people who have lost
6 everything besides countless hours of work and
7 friends and everything else. To replace what you
8 lost and what you can't recover. Not all of us
9 are able to do it and I'm telling you, the verge
10 of a nervous breakdown. Just remember that.

11 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I can
12 believe you. To be continued for sure and
13 hopefully we will focus a little bit more on this
14 also. I want to thank you all for coming in and
15 sharing your experience and working on solutions
16 to try to resolve this epidemic. Thank you very
17 much. Last panel is Mike Barr, Staten Street
18 Tenants, Diana Foster, representing herself and
19 her neighbors, Margaret Fitzgerald and Cesar Soto,
20 Freedom Pest Canine Unit. Is there anyone else
21 here that wishes to testify? Pleas raise your
22 hand. Is there anyone else here that wishes to
23 testify? Okay. So any of those individuals that
24 I called please come forward.

25 I assume that there's no one else

1
2 that wishes to testify because no one raised their
3 hand, is that correct? Then I am correct. Please
4 come forward then. Sergeant of Arms can you give
5 her a slip please, if you don't mind. Ladies
6 first, sir you don't mind do you?

7 CESAR SOTO: Absolutely.

8 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Please
9 identify yourself and you may begin.

10 DIANA FOSTER: I'd like to say
11 thank you. My name is Diana Foster and I live in
12 Brooklyn, New York. I'm not going to repeat what
13 everyone else has said.

14 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Well
15 thank you or else we'll be here all day.

16 MS. FOSTER: I'd like to share with
17 everyone how this infestation has impacted on my
18 life. I'm very active in community board 8. I
19 sit on the sub-committee of transportation,
20 housing, youth and family services. I'm very
21 active in my church and it's a very prominent
22 church in Brooklyn.

23 January 22nd we had a tenant
24 association meeting. I was told that there were
25 two apartments that had bed bugs. I called 3-1-1

1
2 a couple of days later and filed a complaint for
3 my next door neighbor who had them because I felt
4 they could crawl next door. This had to be the
5 end of January.

6 Let me go back. I moved into my
7 apartment in November. In December I took my
8 landlord to court for ants in my cabinets, ants.
9 So we were in court at the end of December. Here
10 I am in January and now I have bed bugs. This is
11 temporary housing that I have under OMH, Office of
12 Mental Health because I supposedly have a label
13 and my landlord Services for the Underserved. I
14 have been in contact with Services for the
15 Underserved, I have been in contact with the
16 Office of Mental Health. While I was sitting here
17 I had a phone call from Karen Abbott who is in
18 charge of the housing for the Office of Mental
19 Health.

20 I have not been at a community
21 board meeting for the last two weeks. When I
22 first got bit it was a bite on my arm and on my
23 shoulder. I went to my doctor, who I have known
24 since 1973 and he said you have an allergic
25 reaction to something. I said to him could it be

1
2 bed bugs and he said no. He gave me some cream.
3 I went home. Two days later I'm itching again. I
4 called him again. He says if you're still
5 itching, maybe you need to go to a dermatologist.
6 It was a Friday, I didn't go to a dermatologist, I
7 didn't go to a hospital.

8 That Monday I was scratching like
9 no tomorrow. I was digging into my skin. I went
10 back to my doctor. I still only had two bumps on
11 my body and I said are you sure this is not bed
12 bugs.

13 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Were
14 you suspecting bed bugs?

15 MS. FOSTER: Yes.

16 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Did
17 you look and see if you found any?

18 MS. FOSTER: No, not that Monday,
19 no. I went back to him. He gave me a
20 prescription for some cream that was so serious
21 the pharmacist had to call him before he would
22 give it to me. He gave me a pill that makes me
23 very groggy and very sleepy. Even the next day
24 you can still see me being groggy, this is Monday.
25 I'm sleeping on my couch. Tuesday I woke up and

1
2 there was a bug on my couch. I put him in a
3 little jar and went back to my doctor and I said
4 to him what is this. He says to me I don't know.
5 But it has six legs.

6 I went to Long Island College
7 Hospital Emergency Room. They told me on the spot
8 it was bed bugs. They had to give me two
9 injections on the spot to stop the itching and the
10 scratching. As of this date, Services for the
11 Underserved, Office of Mental Health has not
12 helped me at all. My church, my pastor sent in an
13 exterminator a week and a half ago and the church
14 paid for it.

15 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: How
16 much?

17 MS. FOSTER: I'm not sure for it,
18 my pastor said he would pick up the tab.
19 Originally after the bed bug on the couch, I slept
20 on two chairs. I had my head in one chair and my
21 bottom on another chair.

22 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Did
23 you think that that would stop them?

24 MS. FOSTER: I took ammonia and put
25 it around the leg of the chairs. I'm living out

1
2 of plastic bags. There are plastic bags with what
3 is cleaned and plastic bags with what has not been
4 cleaned. I threw out the couch. I come home and
5 I hang up my coat, my clothes and my pocketbook on
6 a plastic hanger in my bathroom. I get up in the
7 morning and I'm shaking my hair. I am going
8 through some stuff that you can not believe it
9 unless you've been there.

10 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Oh, I
11 can believe it.

12 MS. FOSTER: I just want to say one
13 thing, as far as people of color.

14 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I'm
15 just trying to come to a conclusion.

16 MS. FOSTER: It took a lot for me
17 to come out of the closet with my mental health
18 label to come here. It took a lot for me to call
19 Assemblyman Kareem Camara who I know personally.
20 It took a lot for me to call Councilwoman Letitia
21 James. It took a lot for me to go to the 77th
22 precinct and ask the detectives could you please
23 help me.

24 I'm sitting here and I'm asking for
25 help for all of the people that are going through

1
2 what I'm going through. The task force in a year
3 is unrealistic. Here I am, a former client of New
4 York City shelter system, a former drug addict and
5 here I am sitting here today crying and I'm a
6 substance abuse counselor who hangs out with the
7 movers and the shakers of community board 8. Why
8 am I living like this when I did nothing to
9 deserve this?

10 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay.

11 I hear you.

12 MS. FOSTER: Thank you.

13 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Well
14 thank you for coming in and giving emotional
15 testimony about the negative experiences that
16 you're going through, that's important. Hopefully
17 other people are listening and we're listening and
18 understand what you're going through. Clearly
19 others have testified the emotional strain it has
20 had on their lives not only emotionally but
21 financially and otherwise. I don't know if you
22 were sitting here earlier when I said, I've
23 experienced that myself so I know, growing up as a
24 kid. I'm glad to say that I have not experienced
25 it as an adult because I would have to deal with

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2 it. What most people said is education is the
3 most important thing.

4 Obviously your doctor was acting
5 stupid in my opinion. I'm going to say that, your
6 doctor was acting like an uneducated fool. By
7 diagnosing and giving you medication and he
8 doesn't even know what's wrong with you. That was
9 clear from what you said assuming everything you
10 said was true and I believe you.

11 MS. FOSTER: I believe that my
12 doctor, he's misinformed. He's with the public--

13 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON:

14 [interposing] Hello, he's supposed to be at a
15 level where he's not supposed to be diagnosing you
16 without actually knowing what the situation is. I
17 understand that MDs, they have medical opinions
18 but their medical opinions should be based on
19 years of experience. In my opinion what you
20 described, without him really looking into it he
21 diagnosed the wrong situation for you, which he
22 put you on medication, which made you groggy and
23 all kind of stuff like that. Anyway, I'm not
24 going to go into that. Let me go to the next
25 person. Ladies first, you don't mind, do you?

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MR. SOTO: Absolutely.

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ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON:

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Ingrid, no not Ingrid. Christine Carol, you're representing yourself and your husband.

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CHRISTINE CAROL: That's right.

6

Yes, I am. He's at a rehearsal right now. We're both opera singers--

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8

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON:

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[interposing] Ingrid, come on up Ingrid. Where are you at? Ingrid come up here. Go ahead Christine and I'm going to ask you to keep your stories as short as possible so we can get out of here.

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MS. CAROL: We're both performers,

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opera singers and Broadway singers. But also I am permanently partially disabled. I got injured at what we call our survivor jobs on computers.

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18

Wrecked my neck and my hands and my arms. My

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husband has a fake hip and two fake knees. He is going to be 74 years old.

20

21

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Young

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man.

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MS. CAROL: He looks like he's 50.

24

But lifting and scrubbing and cleaning and

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1
2 everything, we have not even one body between the
3 two of us that can really handle the bed bug
4 infestation. We had a severe infestation. We
5 don't know where it came from.

6 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Where
7 do you live at? What area?

8 MS. CAROL: 54th and 7th Avenue in
9 a lovely pre-war rent stabilized apartment that
10 the landlord would very much like to get. We were
11 infested severely. We didn't know we had them. I
12 was bit head to toe and thought I had a rash.
13 Finally I saw blood on the sheets, they came with
14 an exterminator after I begged somebody to come.
15 I don't know what this is but I saw something
16 crawl that almost was the size of my little nail
17 here, round and brown. I said this is weird.
18 They finally came. They've exterminated seven
19 times. We are supposedly bed bug free. The last-

20 -

21 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON:
22 [interposing] Seven time sin what period of time?

23 MS. CAROL: Since November the
24 Monday after Thanksgiving until two weeks ago.

25 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay.

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Go ahead.

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MS. CAROL: They have not caulked all the holes in this pre-war apartment. I am scared to death the people above us are going to end up with them. I talked to the people next door. The landlord didn't want us to talk to anyone. They are trying to accuse us--

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ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON:

[interposing] Did the people next door have it?

MS. CAROL: Hmm?

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Did

the people next door have bed bugs, the apartment above or below?

MS. CAROL: This young girl next

door is like I don't know.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Did

you ask her?

MS. CAROL: I said you don't want

this to happen to you, the emotional, physical and financial devastation. I'm on Social Security disability and workman's compensation. My husband is on his pension and Social Security.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: So

you're on a fixed income?

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2 MS. CAROL: Yes. And I'm trying to
3 get well enough so I can go back out and perform
4 and do what it is I am. But the emotional, almost
5 nervous breakdown time. We've been sleeping on a
6 couch and a chair. My husband is sleeping in a
7 chair with... This has been going on since before
8 Thanksgiving.

9 The landlord will not allow the
10 exterminator to give us the piece of paper saying
11 we are "bed bug free", which has to go to--because
12 they want to approve what the exterminator says.
13 Then if we have that piece of paper we can finally
14 get that to Sleepy's so they will deliver the
15 already paid for box spring that will not have a
16 warranty unless we have that piece of paper. So
17 we can't even get a bed frame in there to sleep
18 on.

19 We are still covered with bags,
20 things that we haven't been able to clean--

21 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON:
22 [interposing] As you know, you've heard testimony
23 I don't know if any of them can give you a
24 guarantee.

25 MS. CAROL: I don't think that

1
2 there is a guarantee. I think they're hiding out
3 in the walls, going up to the next apartment and
4 that we should form a tenant's association. And
5 make sure that every single person in that
6 building knows what we went through because we
7 don't want anyone to ever go through this.

8 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: How
9 many units in your building?

10 MS. CAROL: There are four on each
11 floor. There are 14 floors.

12 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: All
13 right, four times fourteen, that's about 56 units,
14 something like that?

15 MS. CAROL: They're trying to evict
16 us although we know they can't--

17 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON:
18 [interposing] Well keep fighting.

19 MS. CAROL: Oh, of course.

20 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Form a
21 tenant's association and keep fighting.

22 MS. CAROL: I think that's the best
23 idea but in the meantime I don't know what to do
24 to force the landlord to get us that piece of
25 paper so that we can get a box spring. My neck is

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getting wrecked from this.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I don't know if you can force that but maybe we should...

MS. CAROL: I just need that piece of paper saying we are supposedly "bed bug free" so I can give it to Sleepy's and have them deliver this stupid thing. I'd like to sleep in my bed again near my husband.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Who's your Council Member?

MS. CAROL: I don't know.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: 54th and where. Gale who is that?

MS. CAROL: 54th and 7th.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Christine Quinn? 54th and where?

MS. CAROL: 7th Avenue, 161 West 54th.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Go online and find out who your Council Member is and contact them because I don't even know whether or not HPD can force the landlord to give you a piece of paper saying that your apartment is bed bug

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free. Do you know what I mean?

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MS. CAROL: It's just that we needed something from the exterminator. They were going to fax it to us and the landlord got in there. They want to approve what the exterminator says.

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ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Who is paying for the mattress from Sleepy's?

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MS. CAROL: We paid for it. Actually the Actors Fund of America, no the Episcopal Actors Guild paid for it.

11

12

13

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: In order for Sleepy's to give you the mattress with a guarantee, is that correct?

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MS. CAROL: It's not a guarantee it just says--

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18

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON:
[interposing] Warranty?

19

20

MS. CAROL: I haven't seen it. Supposedly they called us up and said you're bed bug free. We said what we need for Sleepy's because they won't deliver it and honor the warranty on the new box spring--

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ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON:

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[interposing] Oh, won't honor the warranty.

MS. CAROL: That's correct. Unless they have a piece of paper stating--

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON:
[interposing] Maybe you should, based on what you heard, just get the damned mattress. I'm sorry. And then sleep on it and if necessary get the encasement.

MS. CAROL: Oh, we've got the encasement already.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I'm just saying that sometimes you have to do what you got to do. Do you understand? Then constantly inspect to make sure you don't see the feces, you don't see all of that blood. This is a continuous battle.

MS. CAROL: We know.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON:
Education is the most important thing.

MS. CAROL: Thank you very much.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you for coming in and giving testimony.

MS. CAROL: You're welcome.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: It's

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crazy.

MS. CAROL: It is, it's nuts.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: We're going to hear from Ingrid and then we're going to hear from the last but not least is Caesar Soto from Freedom Pest Canine Unit, is that correct?

MR. SOTO: Yes, it is.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay. So Ingrid your next. These are the last two witnesses and then we're out of here.

INGRID BOCKNER: Hi, I'm Ingrid Bockner. Thank you very much and I think the task is very important. I'm a little bit nervous.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: That's okay. Where do you live at Ingrid, what borough?

MS. BOCKNER: I live in Waverly Place. My Council Member is the wonderful Alan Gerson.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay, very good.

MS. BOCKNER: Yes, he's great.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Do you have bed bugs?

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2 MS. BOCKNER: My dog and I we
3 started to scratch about two weeks before
4 Christmas. Then I looked on the sheets and so on
5 and so forth. I only suspected bed bugs because a
6 friend of mine had them a year earlier. Otherwise
7 I would not have been informed of what's going on.
8 I called the landlord, he didn't react fast enough
9 in my opinion. I informed myself on the internet
10 and the exterminator finally came after two weeks
11 or so.

12 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Was it
13 bed bugs?

14 MS. BOCKNER: At this location I
15 found Renee Corea's around on the internet right
16 away. She was very, very helpful. To make a long
17 story short I went through everything other people
18 went through. I even emailed German exterminators
19 and got information. I'm still living out of--

20 The cost was horrendous. I got a
21 new mattress and I put encasement on right away.
22 The apartment was cleaned, I gave out the laundry,
23 did the laundry on a daily basis, dry cleaning. I
24 didn't keep track. I still owe a nice
25 organization \$700 as a loan and I'm still living

1 out of plastic bags and now I have fleas.

2
3 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: You
4 have fleas?

5 MS. BOCKNER: Yes.

6 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I was
7 going to ask you, did they determine they were bed
8 bugs or were they fleas or ticks or other stuff?
9 That's what my question is. I assume you meant
10 bed bugs but...

11 MS. BOCKNER: I am convinced that I
12 had bed bugs.

13 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: How
14 are you convinced? Make me an offer of proof.

15 MS. BOCKNER: Because I saw the
16 blood on the sheets, I saw the droppings. My dog
17 was sleeping on the container and I looked inside
18 and there was whole mess--

19 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON:
20 [interposing] Of bed bugs in there too?

21 MS. BOCKNER: So I got rid of
22 everything and the bedroom is totally clean. The
23 exterminator came on a regular basis but my flea
24 situation is horrendous.

25 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: You

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have fleas?

MS. BOCKNER: The fleas and I do everything possible to keep us un-disgusted. I haven't had a real - - for Christmas.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: How big is your apartment or your home?

MS. BOCKNER: I have a one bedroom.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: And the infestation, was that limited to your bedroom, was it your bedroom, your living room, your kitchen, your hallways, where?

MS. BOCKNER: The carpet, I had to-

-

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON:
[interposing] It was your whole apartment.

MS. BOCKNER: My whole apartment and this is the main point, my kitchen is here and on the other side is an apartment of a gentleman over 80 who is the filthiest guy on earth. He goes on the street and collects garbage and brings it home.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: So what's your point?

MS. BOCKNER: My point is that I

1
2 find flea wings or whatever you call them on my
3 stove. I find the whole kitchen has black spots.
4 I sometimes try to make--

5 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON:
6 [interposing] Little popping noise, little
7 clicking noise.

8 MS. BOCKNER: Yes. They are coming
9 over.

10 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: You
11 think so?

12 MS. BOCKNER: Yes.

13 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay.
14 I'm just asking you.

15 MS. BOCKNER: The exterminator said
16 that I brought them in and then I got mad that I
17 brought the bed bugs in.

18 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: You
19 feel that your neighbor may be contaminating you?

20 MS. BOCKNER: He brings in things
21 from the street every day.

22 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Did
23 you report that to your landlord?

24 MS. BOCKNER: Of course, they are
25 trying to get him out.

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2 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: How
3 many apartments in your building?

4 MS. BOCKNER: I don't know.

5 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Give
6 or take, 10, 15, 100.

7 MS. BOCKNER: It used to be a hotel
8 on Waverly Place.

9 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay,
10 so there's a lot of units.

11 MS. BOCKNER: A lot of students.

12 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Have
13 you talked to your neighbors, other people in
14 there? Other people have bed bugs?

15 MS. BOCKNER: I tell everybody I
16 see.

17 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: No, do
18 other tenants have bed bugs?

19 MS. BOCKNER: Nobody said so, no.
20 They tell me that they did something about the
21 other apartments. He also goes through the
22 garbage on our floor.

23 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Who,
24 your neighbor? So he's a garbage picker.

25 MS. BOCKNER: That's what he is, he

1
2 is a garbage picker and he gets his meals out of
3 there.

4 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay.
5 You made your point, is there anything else
6 because I have to move on. Help me out Irene, is
7 there anything else? Ingrid, I'm sorry.

8 MS. BOCKNER: What can I do?

9 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON:
10 Complain to your landlord, complaint to HPD, also
11 contact Gale Brewer. She's the bed bug king.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I'll work
13 with you on it.

14 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Bed
15 bug queen.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I'll make
17 Alan his job. We'll talk later. Let's keep going
18 Robert, we'll deal with it later. Bill Perkins
19 was call the rat man because he dealt with the
20 mats. Gale Brewer has a name and we're going to
21 buy her a gold pin to put on her lapel. You're
22 laughing, seriously because she's done so much
23 work on this subject as everyone has indicated.
24 She's really been the leader in the City Council.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you,

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Robert. There is another witness coming.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I understand.

MS. BOCKNER: Thank you.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: You are the leader on this Gale. Last but not least, the man with the purple shirt on with the little dog on there and it says Freedom Pest Canine Unit. I'm not giving you a promotion but that's what it says.

MR. SOTO: That's what it says.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Caesar go ahead please.

MR. SOTO: My name is Caesar Soto and I'm a victim and I'm also an expert on bed bugs.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: A victim and an expert.

MR. SOTO: Exactly.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Explain that.

MR. SOTO: I also breed bed bugs, I also feed bed bugs like Lou. Lou's been doing this for years. I had a friend come over and he

1
2 brought me bed bugs from L.A. because I have the
3 dog. We found them, we got rid of them and that
4 was that. But you said something interesting
5 earlier.

6 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: What
7 was that?

8 MR. SOTO: Years of experience,
9 that's what qualifies someone as a bed bug expert
10 or an expert in any field.

11 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Years
12 of experience.

13 MR. SOTO: Years of experience and
14 they have to prove that they've been successful
15 with this bed bug situation. I've heard a lot of
16 things being said today and I just wanted to touch
17 on three little factors here then I will read my
18 little say so.

19 In reference to landlords and
20 Sanitation, I think they have to work a lot closer
21 together. I don't work for a lot of landlords.
22 Most of my work is done for residential private
23 homeowners. I don't have lots of landlords
24 because they're not receptive to my program, I
25 don't want to work with the landlord. The few

1
2 landlords that I do have, for example, we have bed
3 bug protocol in the building. So if there is an
4 apartment that's been identified with bed bugs,
5 the other apartments no matter what has to be
6 inspected. That is crucial. Every adjacent
7 apartment--

8 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON:

9 [interposing] Apartment 2A and there are let's say
10 six apartments on the floor. Are you talking
11 about all the apartments or the adjacent
12 apartments?

13 MR. SOTO: Adjacent apartments,
14 top, bottom, left, right, that's your perimeter.
15 What do we do? I've heard all this talk about
16 plastic bags and the mattresses, we do it quite
17 simple, inexpensive. We alcohol the mattress,
18 shrink wrap it and then discard it, that's what we
19 do. Bed bugs will not escape a shrink wrapped
20 mattress.

21 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: What
22 do you mean by that?

23 MR. SOTO: Shrink wrap is the same
24 plastic wrap that's used to haul cargo on trucks.
25 That's what we do. Very inexpensive and that will

1
2 give you a tight seal on the mattress. I believe
3 that also mattresses shouldn't be discarded on a
4 daily basis. We have in our basements in the
5 buildings a place where infested furniture will be
6 put and then it will go out.

7 For example, let's say someone is
8 tossing their stuff out on a Saturday. It's going
9 to sit on the sidewalk or on the basement for two
10 to three days before Sanitation picks it up. The
11 same way they pick up refrigerators and other
12 pieces of furniture, once a week or every other
13 week, there should be a number where landlords can
14 call and get these mattresses or bed bug stuff
15 removed. This way is more controlled.

16 I'm an advocate of being proactive
17 so the city, the Sanitation Department and
18 landlords worked a little closer together...It's
19 not going to cost much. I don't see this big
20 burden on the taxpayer or this big burden on the
21 landlord to shrink wrap the mattress, call a
22 number and have these mattresses removed. So that
23 the refurbished guy can't pick them up off the
24 street. So that the guy that's not doing who's
25 not doing too well doesn't pick it up off the

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street.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: What makes you think, because you wrap it in plastic they don't pick it up?

MR. SOTO: No, no, no. If they're picked up in a timely manner by Sanitation.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I'm talking about anyone. You said that what you do is you alcohol. What do you do?

MS. BOCKNER: Yes. We spray with alcohol because that kills bed bugs.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: And then you what?

MS. BOCKNER: Then we shrink wrap it so we're suffocating the bugs.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Right so suffocate.

MS. BOCKNER: Exactly, it's like suffocating the bugs.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Then you put it out on the street?

MS. BOCKNER: We leave it in the building until the Sanitation truck is appearing; it doesn't stay on the street. With my landlords,

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that's how we do it.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay.
In essence you have a working agreement with your
landlords.

MS. BOCKNER: Exactly, there you
go. The city should work into a program with
landlords as an incentive if you bed bug free
certify an apartment. This is what I've
introduced to certain landlords and they loved it.
So we go in, we run the dog, we seal your
apartment up, we guarantee there are no bed bugs.
People want that apartment a lot quicker.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: And
you certify that that apartment is bed bug free?

MS. BOCKNER: Absolutely.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: When
you say you seal the apartment, what do you mean
by that to a lay person?

MS. BOCKNER: Okay. We caulk the
apartment--

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON:
[interposing] With clear caulking you mean?

MS. BOCKNER: With clear caulking,
silicone caulk.

1
2 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: So now
3 in an apartment, in a lot of these buildings you
4 have the base boards and you have the cracks from
5 the--

6 MS. BOCKNER: [interposing] There's
7 a solution to every problem.

8 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I'm
9 just saying, you have the lamp fixture where the
10 wires are coming down or the wall over here. You
11 have the light plates, you have the light sockets,
12 all of that stuff.

13 MS. BOCKNER: With all due respect,
14 if there are wires hanging out that's a violation
15 in and of itself, outside of bed bugs.

16 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: You
17 may have the metal things that the bed bugs can
18 get behind it.

19 MS. BOCKNER: There's a - - and
20 then there's a light switch and then you caulk,
21 that's it. You want to deter as much as possible.
22 You also have a non-toxic treatment for bed bugs
23 because if they do get through, if they do find an
24 entry point. Because they're going to probe for
25 an entry point so you have something there waiting

1
2 for them. Be beg proofing an apartment is
3 actually the way to go, that's how lots of
4 landlords are going now to stop the spread of bed
5 bugs throughout the building. It's actually cost
6 effective for a landlord to do that because if he
7 can isolate the problem to one apartment and then
8 it doesn't reach other apartments.

9 My landlords love me because we're
10 on top of it--

11 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON:
12 [interposing] What other points--real quick
13 because--I'm sorry.

14 MR. SOTO: For the task force, I
15 support the task force and I also support that
16 you're looking into dogs in detecting bed bugs.

17 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: As a
18 lay person I've seen commercials about dogs and
19 what have you and so forth. What makes a dog so
20 special compared to those companies that don't
21 have a dog. Help me out here; educate me.

22 MR. SOTO: Because the dog can do
23 something that a human can't.

24 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: What's
25 that?

1
2 MR. SOTO: The dog can sniff out
3 that bed bug where you can't see it, where it's
4 deep inside of a crack. If it's a first in star
5 bed bug, it's really, really small.

6 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: A
7 first what?

8 MR. SOTO: First in star bed bugs,
9 a nymphal bed bug.

10 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: And
11 what is an in star bed bug?

12 MR. SOTO: An in star is when it is
13 first hatched.

14 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: So the
15 first stage?

16 MR. SOTO: Exactly, there you go.
17 If that bed bug is in the that chair and it's
18 hidden underneath my dog will pick that up, know
19 it's there.

20 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Even
21 one little?

22 MR. SOTO: Even one little.

23 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON:
24 Normally if there is one, there's a lot more than
25 one.

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MR. SOTO: There you go.

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ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Not

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usually but usually a few more. You never go by

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just the one. The things with the dogs is this, I

5

love dogs. I am the first company to have a

6

certifying inspector dog, an inspector the

7

National Entomology Detection Canine Association

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out in Florida. There are certain trainers

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throughout the country. I believe I picked the

10

best trainer and we have not got it wrong. If you

11

Google Caesar Trey bed bugs you will see hundreds

12

and hundreds of reviews on my, my dog and my

13

service.

14

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON:

15

Really?

16

MR. SOTO: Absolutely. I stand

17

firm by that. Now the last eight to twelve months

18

a lot other companies have jumped on the

19

bandwagons with the dogs.

20

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON:

21

Because it's a big problem. Supply and demand.

22

MR. SOTO: Exactly, there you go.

23

If you call me, I'm going to ask you certain

24

questions. If I feel that I don't need a dog, I'm

25

1
2 not bringing a dog because why am I going to bring
3 a dog to tell us what we already know. Do you
4 understand? And that's what I see other companies
5 doing. They're bringing in a dog just to cash in
6 on the dog.

7 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay
8 so you bring a dog and say yes, you have bed bugs.

9 MR. SOTO: And then we do a
10 service.

11 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON:
12 Because you go in and you probably can see all of
13 the residue and all of the--

14 MR. SOTO: [interposing] Exactly.

15 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: If you
16 came in and I owned a co-op, two bedrooms, two
17 bathrooms, facing the park, blah, blah, blah,
18 blah, blah. I think I have bed bugs and I call
19 you in. Tell me what you come in you do and how
20 much you're going to charge me. And I'm poor; I
21 don't have too much money.

22 MR. SOTO: You're not sure you have
23 bed bugs?

24 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I'm
25 not sure.

1
2 MR. SOTO: This is what I'm going
3 to do. Once I know where you're at financially
4 then I'm going to try to take the dog off the
5 table because the dog is expensive.

6 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Give
7 me a price range.

8 MR. SOTO: For the dog?

9 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Yes,
10 to come in and...

11 MR. SOTO: There is a set price,
12 \$225 an hour for a canine search.

13 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I'm
14 starting to itch right now.

15 MR. SOTO: There you go. You
16 understand/

17 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I'm
18 serious right now. I'm not joking. So you come
19 in and you go with the dog around the apartment.

20 MR. SOTO: Exactly and we find
21 spots where bed bugs are hiding. Let me put it
22 this way, if a dog alerts to a particular area of
23 a room some people have the misconception that
24 that is the only thin you treat. That is not
25 correct. You treat the whole room because the

1
2 dogs can detect 99% to 100% of viable bed bugs,
3 living, breathing bed bugs. But at the egg stage
4 we drop 10%, it's about 90% to 91%. Because of
5 that 10% discrepancy you have to treat the whole
6 room and not to take it for granted that the bed
7 bug didn't lay eggs on the other side of the room
8 prior to being discovered. Do you see what I
9 mean? Do you see where I'm going?

10 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Yes, I
11 understand.

12 MR. SOTO: Okay, there you go. So
13 that's how that works. If you're going to form a
14 task force, I believe that not using canines, you
15 are probably going to shoot yourself in the foot.

16 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: In
17 essence it is to be the whole field of things that
18 you need to do in order to examine the totality of
19 the problem, including canines and everything
20 else.

21 MR. SOTO: Canines work well in the
22 areas where I keep being bit and no one can find
23 anything; like in her case where she is being
24 bitten and they can't find anything. That's where
25 dogs come in.

1
2 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I
3 don't know if they couldn't find anything, the
4 doctor was saying it was not bed bugs. But the
5 doctor didn't go in there and look. I don't know
6 if anyone would go there and look.

7 MR. SOTO: I'm a compassionate
8 person and I'm sure that's also missing in the
9 pest control woman. For this woman here, we're
10 going to go to her house, we're not going to
11 charge her anything and we're going to see what we
12 can do.

13 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: You're
14 going to do that for her?

15 MR. SOTO: We're going to do that
16 for her. Absolutely. It won't be the first time.

17 [Applause]

18 MR. SOTO: It won't be the first
19 time that I've done something like that.

20 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I
21 believe you.

22 MR. SOTO: It's on the internet;
23 it's there. I'm not a big advertiser, I'm not a
24 big commercial guy. But that's what we do. I got
25 you.

1
2 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Did
3 you make all of the points you wanted to make?

4 MR. SOTO: Yes. The canines, the
5 adjacent departments and the Sanitation and the
6 landlords working a little closer together. Yes.

7 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I have
8 a question, how many visits does it normally take
9 on an average? I know that there are one or two
10 visits that may be five or six. But give me an
11 average, how many visits in order to eradicate and
12 certify an apartment?

13 MR. SOTO: That's a good question,
14 you heard earlier today, two visits. We
15 religiously give you three, no matter what, that's
16 in writing.

17 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Over
18 what period of time.

19 MR. SOTO: Your initially visit,
20 let's say it's today. Then your second visit is
21 between 10 and 14 days.

22 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Why?

23 MR. SOTO: Because any eggs that
24 are hatching will be hatching around that time.
25 The gentleman earlier today said 17 but it can be

1
2 17, it can be 15. We like to take within two
3 weeks to go back.

4 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Two to
5 three weeks you go back?

6 MR. SOTO: Exactly. Now that last
7 and final treatment is anywhere between three and
8 six weeks later.

9 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Why?

10 MR. SOTO: That would be dictated
11 by the conversations I have with the client. No
12 bites, we push it further away; no reason to keep
13 introducing the chemicals if the chemicals that
14 are there are already working.

15 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: So
16 today you come, two to three weeks later you come
17 again and you do extermination?

18 MR. SOTO: Right. The first visit
19 is what we call the initial treatment. We do
20 something totally different. I'm an advocate of
21 heat. Heat will always kill bud bugs so we steam
22 everything. We vacuum and we steam everything;
23 every inch of--

24 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON:
25 [interposing] You come in with your steamer and

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you use...

MR. SOTO: Steam cleaners, exactly.

The steamers--

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON:

[interposing] The steam cleaning of the mattress, the fecal matter from bed bugs and what have you, do you steam all of that?

MR. SOTO: We steam everything that we have to.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Do you brush it or do you just steam it?

MR. SOTO: Then we vacuum it, yes, with HEPA vacuums.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I'm asking because you're basically giving me the protocol. I'm asking because--that's it right there?

MR. SOTO: Yes.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON:

Sergeant at Arms. Then you said the third visit is anywhere from how long?

MR. SOTO: Between three and six weeks depending on the treatment.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON:

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Depending on the communication with the client?

MR. SOTO: Exactly, there you go.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Give me an average cost factor.

MR. SOTO: An average of a one bedroom apartment on the light side.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Light infestation.

MR. SOTO: Anywhere between \$500 and \$700.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: A two bedroom assuming that both bedrooms were infested.

MR. SOTO: \$1,200.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Not light, I'm talking about heavy.

MR. SOTO: \$1,200 on average. That's three visits. You have to remember that that first treatment can go for four or five hours.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: The first treatment can go how long?

MR. SOTO: Four or five hours because there are two to three technicians there.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I

1
2 don't know, I'm asking. The second visit?

3 MR. SOTO: The second visit now
4 we're going chemical treatment. After that we're
5 strictly going chemical.

6 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: The
7 first treatment is what, steam?

8 MR. SOTO: Steaming and vacuuming,
9 with a chemical application at the very end. Then
10 the next two treatments are chemicals but we're
11 switching chemicals. We're not using the same
12 chemicals we used the first time.

13 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: How
14 long are the mechanics or the technicians there
15 for the second treatment?

16 MR. SOTO: It could be an hour,
17 half hour, two hours, depending how bit the
18 apartment is, depending on what kind of stuff
19 needs to be treated.

20 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: And
21 the last one?

22 MR. SOTO: The last one, the same
23 thing. It could be an half hour, an hour, two
24 hours. It all depends on what's happening, what's
25 going on. Usually the third one is a lot quicker

1
2 because that time it's gone and that's usually how
3 it works.

4 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON:

5 Questions, Gale Brewer, my colleague, Inez
6 Dickens.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: I've met
8 the dogs. The dogs are wonderful, the dogs gave
9 me a ride home one night and I appreciate that.
10 Do you think that some of the suggestions that
11 were made today, Cesar make sense? Specifically
12 in terms of do we need to have specific
13 certification for exterminators, canine or others.
14 Or do you think that it's sufficient to have it
15 just done by the Department of Environmental
16 Conservation? Secondly, this landlord tenant
17 issue, one of the suggestion might be that the
18 owners have to notify the other residents and that
19 they also have to somehow get into the apartments
20 of adjoining residences.

21 MR. SOTO: I believe the EPA and
22 the DEC are doing a good job educating us as far
23 as bed bugs. That typically falls on the pest
24 control company who is the owner, what is the
25 character of that company. Are they really good

1
2 at what they do or are they just in there to make
3 money?

4 Unfortunately that's up to the
5 client to find out. So my suggestion is when you
6 do call for a pest control company, if they don't
7 give you 5, 10 or 20 minutes on the phone, that's
8 not the company for you. Some companies are like,
9 you need it or you don't need it. This is how
10 much it is and then they want to get you off the
11 phone. Those guys you need to stay away from
12 basically.

13 In reference to the landlords, yes,
14 my landlord does notify, absolutely, that there is
15 a bed bug situation in the building and it's under
16 control. These are the steps that are being taken
17 and if anyone else has a bed bug issue, they need
18 to report it. So I have two landlords now that
19 are actually doing exactly that. We've had our
20 bed bug situation totally under control.

21 One of them was at the Bushwick
22 thing and I got that account through Gale Brewer
23 in the way of through a seminar that the city did.
24 He said can you get rid of my bed bugs. I said if
25 you follow my instructions yes, and we've been

1
2 successful.

3 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Follow
4 my instructions.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Actually,
6 Robert, that was quite amazing because he had
7 tried every possible way, this particular owner.
8 And was really upset that nothing had worked. As
9 Cesar got up and spoke and I didn't know until
10 today that it was successful but congratulations.

11 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: That's
12 good. Let me thank all of you for coming in.
13 Obviously if you've been here from the beginning
14 this has been a very, very long hearing but it's a
15 very worthwhile hearing. I say to you and to Gale
16 Brewer, I remember the first the forum in
17 Washington Heights and 158th Street, Gale you were
18 there, I was there, what have you and so forth.
19 Since then to now I know so much I almost qualify
20 as an "expert". I'm joking of course.

21 But I've spent hours and hours and
22 hours of listening, of reading material and
23 hearing testimony and explanations from
24 contractors and from the Department of Health and
25 HPD and so forth that I know a lot about the

1
2 subject area. Especially as someone that
3 experienced it himself. I'm not a dog but I can
4 and look and determine and look behind all kind of
5 stuff to find out, do you know what I mean? Where
6 most people as they say, education is the key. To
7 everyone, not only the residents but the
8 landlords, the sanitation workers, everyone
9 education is the key in this particular matter.

10 I want to thank you all for coming
11 in. I want to thank all of the staff for sticking
12 through this whole process. I want to give the
13 last words to our colleagues Council Member Gale
14 Brewer who is the primary sponsor, who is the key
15 person. She is the bed bug Queen of the City
16 Council.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thanks,
18 Robert.

19 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Which
20 is an honorary name, really it's an honorary name
21 because she has spent so much time and energy on
22 this subject matter as the point person for the
23 City Council. Council Member Gale Brewer.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you
25 very much Council Member Jackson. I want to thank

1
2 Shula Warren and Kanaal Mahatra and Rosalba
3 Rodriguez from our office who have been working on
4 this for days and days. And certainly thank you
5 and most importantly the people in this room,
6 particularly those who are still here who have
7 been struggling and giving us suggestions and
8 advice. I guess all we can say in response is I
9 believe very strongly that government needs to be
10 there for you and we will work on the task force.
11 We will work to have implementation of some of the
12 suggestions that were made here today.

13 I think you've done a couple of
14 things. You've certainly made it clear that the
15 City of New York has to be more proactive and
16 you've given us some great suggestions. I hope
17 that we'll do it even more than some of the other
18 cities that have taken initiative. This is a huge
19 issue. It is a mental health if not a physical
20 health issue. I look forward to working with
21 everyone to solve it. Thank you very much. Thank
22 you Robert.

23 [Applause]

24 ACTING CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I want
25 to thank everyone and it's now 5:43 and this joint

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hearing by the Health Committee, by the Consumer

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Affairs and the Sanitation Committee is hereby

4

adjourned.

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Amber Gibson, 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 Amber Gibson

Date March 6, 2009