

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

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December 9, 2019
Start: 10:33 AM
Recess: 10:49 AM

HELD AT: 250 Broadway - Committee Rm.
16th Fl

B E F O R E: ROBERT E. CORNEGY, JR.
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Fernando Cabrera
Margaret S. Chin
Rafael L. Espinal, Jr.
Mark Gjonaj
Barry S. Grodenchik
Farah N. Louis
Bill Perkins
Carlina Rivera
Helen K. Rosenthal
Ritchie J. Torres

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

2 (sound check) (pause) (gavel)

3 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Good morning

4 everyone and thank you for coming. I'm Council
5 Member Robert Cornegy, Chair of the Committee's
6 Council on—I'm Chair of the Council's Committee on
7 Housing and Buildings. We're here to hold a vote on
8 two very important bills, Proposed Intro 1481-A,
9 which would adopt the latest version of the New York
10 City Plumbing Code and Proposed Intro No. 1482-B,
11 which would require the use of bird-friendly materials
12 on new construction and major alterations. Proposed
13 Intro No. 1481-A, of which I am a sponsor, amends the
14 New York City Public Codes—Plumbing Codes to bring it
15 up to date with the 2015 International Plumbing Code
16 published by the International Code Council. Local
17 Law 33 for Year 2017 requires tri-annual updates to
18 the city's Construction Codes so that they may—they
19 may remain in line with the current International
20 Codes. The code update process requires consensus
21 from various committees that review these codes and
22 make recommendations about their adoption.
23 Amendments to recommended for adoption are then heard
24 and subsequently—subsequently voted on by this
25 committee. The Plumbing Code is the first

2 construction code to be heard during this code cycle.

3 We'll also be voting on Proposed Intro 1482-B

4 sponsored by Council Member Rafael Espinal. Proposed

5 Intro 1482-B seeks to decrease fatal bird strikes in

6 the city by requiring the implementation of certain

7 bird-friendly standards. The city is located along a

8 major migratory path called the Atlantic Flyway. As

9 a result, as many as 230,000 birds die annually in

10 New York as a result collision-of collisions with

11 windows. Birds strike glass because of their intent-

12 inability to detect and avoid glass. This bill

13 requires that new buildings and major alterations use

14 materials that will be visible to birds and thus

15 decrease bird strikes. Due to the length of Proposed

16 Intro 1481, which was over 200 pages and the

17 Council's commitment to helping the environment, I'm

18 excited to announced that today we'll be piloting the

19 first paperless vote of this session. In lieu of

20 receiving a hard copy, each committee member in

21 attendance has received an iPad with the Committee

22 Report. This is one small step toward greening the

23 Council. I'm joined today by Council Members Louis,

24 Grodenchik, Espinal and Cabrera, oh, and Rivera.

25 MALE SPEAKER: [off mic] Torres.

2 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: I'm sorry and
3 Torres. [coughing] I ask the Committee Clerk to--
4 [background comments] to--to call the roll but before
5 we--before we call the roll, um, I would just like to
6 ask my colleagues how they feel about this new
7 technology?

8 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: I think it's
9 great. I lost it already.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Watch out
11 Chairman.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Come on
13 Barry. [background comments/laughter] Okay. Somebody
14 help Barry please. [background comments/laughter]

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Mr. Chairman,
16 I'm the reactionary side.

17 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: [laughs] So, you
18 know, honestly part of my comments cited the fact
19 that this is a small step in--in greening the Council.
20 I'm very excited about--about this step. Most people
21 know that I have in the past read my comments off my
22 iPad. We are working to make sure that this an
23 industry standard for the Council, and we're going to
24 work the bugs out today, but I'm--I'm very excited
25 about beginning a process of a greener City Council

2 as it relates to paper. I'm saddened that we were
3 forced to this by this large document, um, but
4 necessity is the mother of invention, and
5 consequently here we are, here we find ourselves. My
6 colleague Rafael Espinal has remarks, which he also
7 will read after being air-dropped to the Tablet on
8 his bill.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Wow, we finally
10 airdropped something here on the floor, but, no in
11 all seriousness my staff actually texted me before,
12 um, the hearing started, and asked me if they should
13 print out my notes. I said no, we have iPads now,
14 and now we can read it without spending that paper.
15 Um, good morning everyone, and thank you Mr. Chairman
16 for hold this vote on a bill that I consider to be
17 very important in order for us to continue being
18 climate and biodiversity advocates of City Hall. I'm
19 Council Member Rafael Espinal, one of the prime
20 sponsors of Intro 1482-B, a/k/a the Bird Friendly
21 Glass. Since the last ice age, the land we now call
22 New York City has been an important stop on the
23 Atlantic Flyway Bird Migration route. Despite less
24 and less green space, over 200 species either live or
25 pass through the city and nest in our parks and

2 window frames to raise their young. Visit any park
3 and you are likely to see a few dozen with binoculars
4 looking into the trees trying to find traces of our
5 city's secret, but incredible bio-bio-diversity. In
6 fact, in my district Highland Park and Ridgewood
7 Reservoir are popular bird watching locations. A
8 couple of years ago, I along with my staff took a
9 tour of the Javits Center to check out their new
10 green roof and other amenities. As we toured the
11 roof, I looked over to Hudson Yards, and the rest of
12 Manhattan taking in the architecture of the
13 buildings. As I stood staring at the Iconic Skyline,
14 our tour guide explained to me the impact these
15 buildings have on birds and the impact the Javits
16 Center was had on birds migrating. After reviewing
17 the statistics, the Javits Center took it upon
18 themselves to make changes to their building's glass
19 to reduce the number of bird deaths by 90%. I
20 thought myself: Why can't the rest of the city do
21 the same? Which is why I introduced this bill. We
22 have seen this Council historic and extraordinary
23 steps to reduce our carbon footprint. For example,
24 my Green Roofs Bill, which we passed early does
25 require green and solar on top of new construction.

2 This bill today will add to our environmental legacy
3 as we're taking responsibility for our role in the
4 ecosystem that lasted long before our city—before
5 City Hall. Every year over 2 billion birds die from
6 window collisions in this country, and since New York
7 City is along the bird migration route, between
8 90,000 and 230,000 birds from hawks to humming birds
9 die from flying into buildings in our city. This is
10 a staggering statistic especially when we have the
11 means to reduce it. There are different ways to make
12 glass bird friendly, and many experts provided
13 details of that in previous hearings. This bill
14 strikes a careful balance in requiring bird-friendly
15 glass only at heights where birds are most likely to
16 be flying. I am grateful to be—I'm grateful to the
17 many advocates, and experts that have worked with my
18 office and this committee on this bill. I'd like to
19 thank the Chair again for holding this vote, and all
20 of the staff that worked to put this bill together,
21 and I urge my colleagues to vote yes. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you, Council
23 Member, and, um, lastly before we hold—open the roll
24 for the vote, I do want to say that a lot of times us
25 Council Members get to celebrate and take credit for

2 advancements in technology and what happens around
3 here. I want to take this opportunity to thank Jason
4 Goldman, the Speaker's Chief of Staff, and the entire
5 staff who was responsible for trolling behind the
6 scenes in making this day and this initiative
7 possible. So, really—really thank you guys for your
8 vision and implementation of that vision. Please call
9 the—call the roll.

10 CLERK: William Martin, Committee Clerk,
11 roll call vote Committee on Housing and Buildings.
12 Both items are coupled. Chair Cornegy.

13 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: I vote aye.

14 CLERK: Cabrera.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Aye.

16 CLERK: Espinal.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Again, I want to
18 thank all of the staff that worked on putting this
19 bill together, and I vote aye.

20 CLERK: Torres.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: I vote aye.

22 CLERK: Grodenchik.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Aye.

24 CLERK: Perkins.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER PERKINS: Aye.

2 CLERK: Louis.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Aye.

4 CLERK: By a vote of 7 in the
5 affirmative, 0 in the negative and no abstentions,
6 both items have been adopted by the committee.

7 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: I'm going to hold
8 the vote open for 15 minutes. [background comments]
9 Okay. Thank you. Good job. Okay. [gavel]
10 [background comments/pause]

11 CLERK: Continuation roll call Committee
12 on Housing and Buildings, Introduction 1481-and 1482-
13 B. Council Member Gjonaj.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: Aye on all.

15 CLERK: The vote is currently at 8 in the
16 affirmative. [pause]

17 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Committee on
18 Housing and Buildings is-is, um, commenced. [gavel]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date December 16, 2019