

COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

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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 18, 2025

Start: 12:41 p.m.

Recess: 12:57 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 BROADWAY - 8TH FLOOR - HEARING  
ROOM 3

B E F O R E: Pierina Ana Sanchez, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Shaun Abreu  
Alexa Avilés  
Eric Dinowitz  
Oswald Feliz  
Crystal Hudson  
Lincoln Restler

OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS ATTENDING:

Gale A. Brewer  
Amanda Farías

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: This is a microphone check on Housing and Buildings recorded by James Marino on December 18, 2025, in Hearing Room 3.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good afternoon. Welcome to the New York City Council vote on the Committee on Housing and Buildings.

At this time, please silence all electronics and do not approach the dais.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Chair, you may begin.

CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: [GAVEL] Good morning. I'm Council Member Pierina Sanchez, Chair of the Committee on Housing and Buildings. Today marks the final Housing vote of this Council term and, while we did not reach resolution on every housing issue that we set out to tackle, we nonetheless leave behind a clear agenda and strong track record, one defined by confronting the housing crisis, protecting tenants that live in unsafe conditions, expanding fair pathways to home ownership and keeping New Yorkers safe in their homes.

Today, the Committee will be voting on the following slate of legislation. Intro. 571-A, sponsored by Council Member Gale Brewer, directs the

city to study the feasibility of building affordable housing on Wards Island, an important step in identifying new publicly controlled sites where deeply affordable housing can be created.

Intro. 902B, sponsored by Council Member Sandy Nurse, known as the Community Opportunity to Purchase Act, or COPA, gives vetted mission-driven buyers a first opportunity to purchase a very narrow set of at-risk multifamily buildings when an owner chooses to sell, helping preserve affordable housing and prevent displacement in buildings most in need of stabilization.

Intro. Number 994-A, sponsored by Council Member Lincoln Restler addresses cooling in tenant-occupied dwellings by strengthening requirements around cooling systems, recognizing that extreme heat is a growing public health risk, especially for seniors and medically vulnerable tenants.

Intro. Number 1120-B, sponsored by Majority Leader Amanda Farías, which establishes clear timelines for cooperative boards to approve or deny apartment sales, bringing predictability and fairness to a process that can otherwise leave prospective homeowners in limbo for months.

My Introduction 1321-A creates the New York City Existing Building Code, a modern, standalone set of rules specifically designed for older buildings. This code replaces a confusing patchwork of outdated standards with clear, more practical requirements that make it easier for existing buildings to comply with while keeping residents safe, and is the product of a 10-year process led by the Department of Buildings.

Intro. Number 1422-A makes technical updates needed to align the Ad Code and the Construction Codes with the new Existing Building Code.

My Proposed Introduction 1490-B updates the City's Energy Conservation Code to align with the New York State Energy Code with amendments tailored to New York City's building stock. This ensures energy standards that improve safety and efficiency, lowering long-term costs, and reflects the realities of maintaining older buildings in the city. I know that's what everybody's here for today.

Thank you to the Housing and Buildings Committee Staff, Senior Legislative Counsel Austin Malone; Legislative Counsel, Billy Eck; Senior Policy

Analyst, Jose Conde; Policy Analyst, Dirk Spencer, Finance Analyst, Carla Naranjo; and Data Scientist, Reese Hirota. I also want to thank former Committee Counsel, Taylor Zelony, and former Policy Analyst, Andrew Bourne, for their service to the Committee during my tenure. And finally, of course, thanks to my District Team, Chief-of-Staff Maria Villalobos, Deputy Chiefs Ben Ratner and Kim Castellanos, Gerard Fernandez, Dylan Campos, and the entire team.

I am joined today by, roll call, Council Member Abreu, Council Member Dinowitz, Council Member Feliz, Council Member Avilés, Council Member Hudson, Brewer, Restler, and Farías.

Before I ask the Clerk to call the roll, I will call on my Colleagues to talk about their legislation. First, Majority Leader, Amanda Farías.

MAJORITY LEADER FARÍAS: Thank you, Chair Sanchez, and thank you to the Members of the Committee on Housing and Buildings for allowing me to speak on my bill, Intro. 1120-A. This legislation establishes timeline and communication requirements in the cooperative sale and purchase process, addressing a longstanding deficiency where applicants have been left without any response at all. At its

core, the bill prioritizes transparency and fairness while combating discrimination in one of the most significant transactions a New Yorker can make, purchasing a home. Since its introduction, Intro. 1120 has benefited from extensive discussion, stakeholder input, and collaboration with City agencies and my Colleagues in government who co-sponsor this bill. As a result, the version before the Committee today reflects important refinements that strengthen enforcement while ensuring the law is workable for cooperative boards and managing agents. Most notably, enforcement will now be handled by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development through an escalating penalty-based system. HPD will issue summonses returnable to OATH for any violations that were found, which is an approach consistent with how the agency already enforces housing laws across the city. This is intended to ensure accountability without disrupting cooperative governance or forcing outcomes that may not be commensurate with the infraction. The bill also includes procedural safeguards where cooperative corporations will be required to provide application and transfer requirements upfront, acknowledge receipts of

applications within a defined period, identify whether applications are complete or not, and if it isn't, provide feedback on how the application was incomplete and issue decisions within a reasonable timeframe once completeness is established. While many cooperative boards already operate responsibly and in good faith, the absence of basic procedural expectations has created inconsistent outcomes, delayed transactions, and a system where discriminatory practices can persist without accountability. Intro. 1120-A is the remedy. For those reasons, I respectfully urge my Colleagues to support Intro. 1120-A and to vote to advance it out of committee today. Thank you, Chair, for a moment to speak.

CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you, Majority Leader, and congratulations.

Now, Council Member Brewer.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you very much. I'm talking about Intro. 571, which initiates a study on the feasibility of building affordable housing on Wards Island, looking at factors like cost, restrictions, and potential scale. I want to thank Sierra Townsend for her work on this. I

remember when Ed Townsend, you have to have gray hair to know who he was, but he founded Roosevelt Island. It was called Welfare Island. And it was an idea that he had, and then now you know what is there, housing, many other aspects of our city. So I would like to look at the same thing for Wards Island. There's a lot, it's in Manhattan, by the way, in case people don't understand that part. And it's a bit crazy. There's certainly a state institution there. There's a fire training program there. There's a shelter there. Two shelters that I know for sure, and a water treatment plant. So it's an unusual place to think about housing. Love to see Mitchell-Lama 2.0, that would be certainly affordable forever, not like Roosevelt Island that went private. So anyway, I appreciate the work that went into this, and we look forward to a very robust study, because there's a lot of available land on Wards Island. If you haven't been there, you should go see it. Thank you very much. Take the M35 bus, and you're right there. And by the way, don't pay, because nobody pays on the M35 bus. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: All right. Thank you, Council Member Brewer.



2 Council Member Restler, would you like to  
3 say?

4 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Thank you so  
5 much, Chair Sanchez. I just want to begin by just  
6 acknowledging that I think you've done a phenomenal  
7 job leading this Committee. When I end up talking to  
8 constituents about policy issues in the Council, I  
9 think you're the only Chair that I regularly  
10 reference the work that you're doing, and the effort  
11 that you've made to really help us address the  
12 affordability crisis. You are as smart and as  
13 dedicated as any Member of this Body, and we're  
14 really fortunate to have you leading this Committee.

15 Council Member Brewer, I always think  
16 it's interesting that when we're talking about  
17 shelters, we refer to it as Wards Island, when we're  
18 talking about sports, we refer to it as Randalls  
19 Island. I get very confused.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: They're two  
21 different islands.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: All right. You  
23 tell me. It's in Manhattan. It all seems connected,  
24 but I am very proud to be talking about Intro. 994  
25 today. New York City keeps getting hotter and hotter

every single year, and this extreme heat is extremely dangerous. Indeed, the Health Department has estimated that 580 New Yorkers are dying annually from extreme heat, disproportionately, not surprisingly, in low-income, Black and Brown communities. The number one risk factor from climate change is extreme heat, and when you look at who's dying from extreme heat, the most common factor amongst those people is their lack of access to cooling in the home. 107 years ago, back in 1918, New York required landlords to provide heating for tenants following a coal famine, I didn't know there was such a thing as a coal famine, but in researching this, it's long past time that we do the exact same for tenants and provide access to cooling. An apartment is simply not safe, and it's not habitable without cooling. This bill will allow all tenants who need cooling to request it, and landlords have five whole years to comply. We're going to work closely with our colleagues in Albany to push for increased utility assistance to subsidize electricity bills for low- and moderate-income tenants in need. Two years ago, WEACTION brought this idea to my attention, and we have worked closely with them and so many others to

get this, to move this forward. I really want to thank Sonal Jaisal (phonetic) and Caleb Smith from WEACT, the NYJA team, especially Eunice Koh (phonetic), Sharmanti Kanakal (phonetic), and Victoria Saunders (phonetic), the New York League of Conservation Voters, NRDC. Getting this bill over the finish line, including an environmental review was quite simply exhaustive. It was an exhaustive effort, and I've described this legislation as an emotional rollercoaster that has kept many, many, many public servants up working through the night over the past number of weeks. I'd like to just thank a number of them by name. Really, I've never been more impressed in the Council Legislative Division than in partnering with them on this bill. Their dexterity, their hard work, their sharp intellects were on full display in the drafting and the research and the analysis that went into it. That team is led impressively by Jeff Baker. C.J. Murray did masterful work drafting this bill, and he did it while his wife was just about to have her second child. Fortunately for everybody, that child happened a day after bill aging, and they are all in good health. Congrats to C.J. and his family. I want to thank Billy Eck, who

was the primary bill drafter on this and new to the Council team, but did a superb job. Thank you so much to Billy. Deputy Director Brad Reed, Austin Malone, Audrey Sun, and the whole Housing and Buildings Committee team. On the Administration side, the work that MOCJ, led by Elijah Hutchinson and Paul Luzzito did on this was quite simply phenomenal. These guys worked through the night, through the weekend, time and again. Ahmed Taghani not only worked for Gale Brewer, but he's been a friend of mine for almost 20 years, and he cleared his schedule for days amid all of the work that HPD has on their plate to work through this issue and to get this done. I am enormously grateful for his hard work and his team's hard work to make this happen, especially AnnMarie Santiago, Jen Leone, Kim Darga, and really many, many others at HPD. Rit Aggarwala, our Chief Climate Officer, has been just an extraordinary champion for this bill. Hilary Semel at the Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination worked incredibly hard. The entire Environmental Law Unit in the Law Department, Chris Rio, Hilary Meltzer, Chris Harned, those guys are terrific. The team at HCR partnered with us closely, especially Betsy Mallow, the

Executive Deputy Commissioner, really want to thank her. My former staffer, who's now at City Hall, helped to quarterback so much of this effort. He is an extraordinary, he's really a very special person. That's Arvind Sindhvani, who did tremendous work on this. But this wouldn't have happened without the support of the Speaker. Jeremy and the Speaker had my back at every step of the way in supporting this legislation. I really am grateful to them. I think that my Colleagues would agree that I work pretty hard, but my Chief-of-Staff, Molly Haley, works way harder, and she is the smartest person I know. I am just incredibly lucky to get a chance to work with her, and this bill would not have happened if she didn't pour herself into it. And so we're going to save a lot of lives. We're setting a model for the state, the nation, the world on how to handle extreme heat, and I'm really proud of everybody who contributed to it. So thank you all so much.

CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Congratulations, Council Member. Well, we're about to be able to say that. Thank you so much.

I will now ask the Clerk to call the roll.

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2 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Good  
3 afternoon. William Martin, Committee Clerk. Roll call  
4 vote, Committee on Housing and Buildings. All items  
5 are coupled.

6 Chair Sanchez.

7 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Aye on all.

8 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Feliz.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Aye on all. I want  
10 to congratulate Council Member Restler on a very good  
11 bill.

12 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Dinowitz.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Aye on all  
14 except I abstain on 902.

15 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Abreu.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER ABREU: I vote aye.

17 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Avilés.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Aye on all.

19 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Hudson.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER HUDSON: Aye on all.

21 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Restler.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Very proudly,  
23 aye.

24 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: With a  
25 vote of seven in the affirmative, zero negative, no

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2 abstentions, all items are adopted by the Committee  
3 with the exception of Proposed Introduction 902-B,  
4 which is adopted by the Committee with six in the  
5 affirmative, zero in the negative, and one  
6 abstention.

7 Madam Chair, that is a full Committee.

8 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you all.

9 Thanks for bearing with me for all this  
10 time. This hearing is adjourned. [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 31, 2025