

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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June 26, 2019  
Start: 11:21 a.m.  
Recess: 11:28 a.m.

HELD AT: Committee Room - City Hall

B E F O R E: COSTA CONSTANTINIDES  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
Rafael Espinal, Jr.  
Stephen T. Levin  
Carlos Menchaca  
Donovan J. Richards  
Eric A. Ulrich  
Kalman Yeger

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

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Check. Check. Check.  
3 Check. June 26th, 2019's hearing on environmental  
4 protection being recorded by Cherise and Eddie.

5 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: All right.

6 Good morning. My name is Costa Constantinides and I  
7 am Chair on the Committee on Environmental  
8 Protection. This morning we are joined by committee  
9 members Rafael Espinal from Brooklyn, Steve Levin  
10 from Brooklyn, and, on my right, Council member  
11 Donovan Richards from Queens and Council member Eric  
12 Ulrich from Queens. Today we will hold a vote on a  
13 bill and on a resolution designed to protect our  
14 climate. This includes a cleanup of Intro 1253 C  
15 known as the Climate Mobilization Act and resolution  
16 864 A calling for a declaration of a climate  
17 emergency. 1253 C was the largest reduction of  
18 carbon policy ever in any city. By calculations,  
19 will be the equivalent of taking more than 1 million  
20 cars off the road by 2030 and creating measurable  
21 decreases in nitrous oxide, sulfur oxide, and  
22 particulate matter that foul our air and contribute  
23 to higher than average asthma rates. It will put our  
24 biggest and dirtiest buildings on a path of me being  
25 a 40 percent reduction by 2030 and 80 percent

2 reduction by 2050. It will also lead to the creation  
3 of thousands of good middle-class jobs that will pave  
4 the way for us to grow a 21st-century green economy.  
5 This bill that I was a lead sponsor, 1253 C, is the  
6 product of years of hard work in conjunction with the  
7 administration, building owners, architects, energy  
8 efficiency experts, climate scientists, activists,  
9 and builds on a decades-worth of work that began the  
10 passage of local laws 84 and 87. New York City's  
11 buildings account for about 70 percent of our  
12 greenhouse gas emissions and more than half of all  
13 built square footage in the city is in the buildings  
14 25,000 square feet or over. The 50,000 largest  
15 buildings targeted by this bill, just one percent of  
16 the city's floor space, constitute almost one third  
17 of the city's overall commissions. Contrast this to  
18 the city's stock of one to four family homes which  
19 represent 82 percent of the total floor space, but  
20 only 19 percent of the omissions. That is why we had  
21 to start the conversations with these large buildings  
22 because, frankly, that's where the emissions were.  
23 Restoring a safe and stable climate required sweeping  
24 transition to clean energy systems that center on  
25 equity and justice and solutions. It is vital for

2 future. And on us now. Here on this committee we  
3 have an opportunity to set the table for what is  
4 potential to be one of the most transformative  
5 moments in the history of our city. When our  
6 grandchildren look back on this time, they will ask  
7 us what they did to ensure that they will have a  
8 sustainable climate in their old age. This ensures  
9 that we-- you know, we can tell them that we did our  
10 part. Nearly 400 cities, districts, and counties  
11 across the world representing over 34 million people  
12 collectively have recently declared or officially  
13 acknowledge the existence of a global climate  
14 emergency, including Hoboken, San Francisco,  
15 Berkeley, Los Angeles, Montgomery County, Oakland,  
16 Richmond, and Santa Cruz in the United States.  
17 Bristol and London in the United Kingdom and many  
18 cities in Australia, Canada, and Switzerland. And  
19 New York City, as the largest city in the United  
20 States, can act-- can continue to act as a global  
21 leader by both converting to an ecologically,  
22 socially, and economically regenerative economy had  
23 emergencies speed and by organizing this transition  
24 to renewable energy and climate emergency  
25 mobilization efforts by declaring the climate

2 emergency and taking accelerated actions needed to  
3 address this emergency. I recommend a yes vote on my  
4 bill and on our resolution declaring a climate  
5 emergency. We are also joined today by Council  
6 member Yeger from Brooklyn. If the clerk can please  
7 call the role.

8 COMMITTEE CLERK: William Martin,  
9 committee clerk, roll call vote Committee on  
10 Environmental Protection pre-considered introduction.  
11 And-- And resolution 864 A. Chair Constantinides?

12 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: I vote aye.

13 COMMITTEE CLERK: Espinal?

14 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: I vote aye.

15 COMMITTEE CLERK: Levin?

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Aye.

17 COMMITTEE CLERK: Richards?

18 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Aye.

19 COMMITTEE CLERK: Yeger?

20 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: Mr. Chairman, may I  
21 be excused to explain my vote?

22 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Absolutely.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: Thank you. I  
24 intend to vote aye on these two items here in  
25 committee today. However, as I understand it,

2 following this committee meeting, these bills will be  
3 reported to the full Council to be voted on at  
4 today's stated. At today's stated, I will not be  
5 able to vote aye on these two items for the following  
6 reasons:

7 Under section 36 of the New York City  
8 Charter, the bills that we vote on at a stated  
9 meeting of the Council are required to be laid on the  
10 desks of the members seven days prior to the adoption  
11 by the Council, exclusive of Sundays. These two  
12 items were not laid on the desk of the members of the  
13 Council. I know that because, when we walked in here  
14 on Wednesday, the last day for laying bills was  
15 Tuesday night, there was nothing on the desks of the  
16 members of the Council. That's just not-- not just  
17 my opinion, but you can check the Wednesday video of  
18 the stated that we had here in the Chambers of this  
19 Council and you'll see that the members desks had no  
20 papers on them. That's not because the member's  
21 desks just had no papers on them. I assume nobody  
22 broke in here in the middle of the night and stole  
23 the papers off the desks of the members, it's because  
24 the bills were not properly laid. So, when a bill is  
25 not properly laid, I don't believe it's properly

2 before the Council. My suggestion would be to report  
3 this-- these two items out of the committee and to  
4 have them placed on a stated agenda for a future  
5 stated meeting, hopefully the next one because they  
6 are two very important items. However, they will not  
7 be properly before the Council today. So I will vote  
8 aye on both items on the couple of the items on the  
9 agenda, Mr. Clerk, but I will not be able to vote on  
10 them today at the stated. Thank you very much, Mr.  
11 Chairman.

12 COMMITTEE CLERK: Ulrich?

13 COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: I vote aye.

14 COMMITTEE CLERK: By a vote of six in the  
15 affirmative, zero in the negative, and no  
16 abstentions, both items have been adopted by the  
17 committee.

18 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Councilman

19 Yeger, thank you for bringing that to my attention.

20 I'll just say this that I was negotiating with staff  
21 late at night on Tuesday and if they were not here  
22 laying bills on desks, I'm not sure if they that much  
23 free time to be speaking from their homes. So-- I  
24 take them at their word that they were here laying  
25 bills. But thank you, sir.



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2 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: The videos-- The  
3 videos back up that there were no documents on--

4 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Okay.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: the desks Wednesday  
6 morning when we walked in here for the stated.

7 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Okay. Thank  
8 you. I appreciate it. With that, I think we have  
9 everyone. I was gavel this-- gavel this close.  
10 Thank you very much.

11 [gavel]

12 [background comments]

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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 July 4, 2019