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Of the

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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B E F O R E: COSTA G. CONSTANTINIDES, CHAIR

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Stephen T. Levin
Carlos Menchaca
Eric A. Ulrich
Kalman Yeger
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A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Mark Chambers, Director,
Mayor’s Office of Sustainability

Jainey Bavishi, Director of the Mayor’s
Office of Resiliency

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Yes sir. Good morning and welcome to today's New York City Council hearing of the Committee on Environmental Protection. At this time will all panelists please turn on your videos. To minimize the disruption please place electronic devices to vibrate or a silent mode. If you wish to submit testimony you may do so at testimony@council.nyc.gov. Again that is testimony@council.nyc.gov Thank you for your cooperation. You may begin, Chair.

CHAIR CONSTANTINIDES: Okay, great. Alright, good morning and welcome. I am Council Member Costa Constantinides Chair of the Environmental Protection Committee, and today's oversight hearing is on climate change and environmental quality, a public health issue. We will also hear Intro 2149, a local law to amend the Administrative Code of the City of New York in relation to climate indicators, and Resolution 1469 calling on nations around the world to implement United States Senate to approve and the President to ratify a fossil fuel non-proliferation treaty. New York City is experiencing first hand the devastating impacts of climate change and climate disruption. We just concluded the tropical

storm season with a record breaking 30 main storms and 12 lands falling storms in the Continental United States. While the physical...the official hurricane season concludes on November 30th, tropical storms may continue to develop past that day. More than anything need efficient monitoring and evaluation of climate indicators of climate change. In order to undertake efficient monitoring and evaluation, we need an organized and manageable set of climate indicators, and resiliency practices and measures. Currently, there have been more than 30 scientific organizations and agencies monitoring climate and climate resiliency of the New York area. These organizations range from the, range from the Hudson River and environmental conditions of the thermal system to the National Science Foundation's Long-Term Ecological Research Network to Noah's Atmospeheric and Administration Storefront Pology. We have not integrated our water quality data from DEP, DEC and USGS. We have developed biodiversity indicators to support the global convention on biodiversity that includes metrics of wild bird populations has and the aerial extent of wetlands and marine grasses. We need to integrate our remote

sensing data developed by New York City DOITT. Finally, algorithms to standardize these set, different sets, the data sets. Currently, these and other agencies and organizations are undertaking moderate water, but their streams are int integrated, and, therefore, cannot consistently or properly be funded or used for to predict impacts upon the most vulnerable communities. Proposed Intro 2149 brings a climate resiliency indicator and monitory working group to pull together that starting data in a single location, and the creation of two climate indicator pilots, one of which will address equity and social vulnerability, and the other will address climate resiliency indicators and mattress (sic) According to the New York City Panel on Climate Change existing indicators and monitoring systems should be adapted to provide ardent information on climate resiliency. We a comprehensive, adequately funded, multi-jurisdictional, just that multi-jurisdictional indicator and monitoring assessment to enhance the scope and resiliency of our climate efforts. We are also going to hear Resolution 1469 calling on nations around the world to implement, the United

State Senate to approve and the President to ratify a fossil fuel non-proliferation treaty. According to U.S. Energy Information Administration OPEC and fossil fuel companies based declining fortunes for fossil fuel companies despite continued growth. For example OPEC concluded its members are within 600,000 and 2.2 million fewer barrels a day through 2021 that was though necessary just a few months ago to beat global demand. While scientists insist the world must reduce usage by 6% a year, every year until 2030 to avoid catastrophic temperature increases, a fossil fuel upgrading treaty has three pillars and the expansion of new reserves of coal, oil and natural gas with the carbon emissions, phase out current stockpiles to keep carbon underground, and out of the atmosphere, and lastly, promotes economic diversification, renewable energy and other low carbon solutions in a way that leaves no workers, communities or countries behind. We have no alternative but to get behind a sustainable future with continue... We have no alternative to get to a sustainable future. This treaty can make a great future (sic) for everyone. Before I begin, I would like to thank my Committee staff our Committee

Counsel Samara Swanston, Policy Analyst Nadia Johnston and Mickie Chawa, Financial Analyst Jonathan Seltzer, my Legislative Director and Legislative Counsel Nicholas Lozowski for all of their hard work and now we'll hear from the Administration and Samara will administer the oath. Thank you.

SAMARA SWANSTON: Thank you. Costa. To begin with as the Moderator, I have to remind everyone that you're going to be on mute until you're called on to testify when you will be unmuted. I'll be calling on panelists to testify. Be aware that there could be a delay in muting and unmuting so please be patient. Wait and listen for your name to be called. I'll be periodically announcing who the panelists will be. We'll begin with testimony from the Administration, which will be followed by testimony from the members of the public. During the hearing in Council Members would like to ask a question please use the Zoom Raise Hand function, and I will call on you in order. We will be limiting Council Member questions to five minutes including sponsors and (coughs) and now I'd like to deliver the Oath of Administration and we will...

the Administration will be represented by Mark Chambers and Jaime Bavishi. So, Mark Chambers. I don't see him

MARK CHAMBERS: I'm here. Do you see me?

SAMARA SWANSTON: Oh, okay. Sorry. Mark (coughs) Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth before this committee and to respond honestly to Council Member questions.

MARK CHAMBERS: I do.

SAMARA SWANSTON: And Jainey do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth before this committee and respond honestly to Council Member questions?

DIRECTOR JAINEY BAVISHI: I do.

SAMARA SWANSTON: Thank you. You may begin when ready.

MARK CHAMBERS: Thank you. Hopefully everyone can hear me well. Good morning Chair Constantinides and members of the Committee on Environmental Protection. My name is Mark Chambers, and the Director of the Mayor's Office of Sustainability. I'm joined today by my colleague Jainey Bavishi the Director of the Mayor's Office of Resiliency. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the

urgent work of sustainability, climate, and our public health, and the indicators that help us track progress as addressed in Intro 2149. Climate change is upon us and it is lethal. We know this. The results of our addiction to fossil fuels continue to be felt in both our natural world and our natural bodies. We just exited the hottest November on record in what will likely go down as the hottest year on record, and it's not just the scorching heat waves or larger coastal storms that threaten us, but also the ways in which our urban systems and built environments struggle to react to these changes. Here's an example: Despite an overall downward trend, in 2018 like many other cities and states New York saw a troubling increase in our greenhouse gas emissions as reported in our Annual Greenhouse Gas Inventory. That year we saw an increase in the number of extremely hot days or an increase in what we call cooling degree days by 18%, which results in an increased demand for electricity to power air conditioning. Months later in the same year there was an increase in the number of cold days, about a 13% increase in what we call heating degree days, which is caused, which basically caused an increase

in energy demand for heating systems. So, what is particularly concerning and I think is particularly important for New Yorkers to understand is that the time of year when we see these increases matters. You know, many electric generating units switch to fuel oil in in the winter to preserve our gas supply for heating on these extremely cool days. That means that the carbon intensity of the grid gets worse, and in 2018, the time I'm describing it was 7% more carbon intensive than it was the previous year, and our air gets dirtier, too, as a result. Now, this committee knows that the health of New Yorkers is impacted by fossil fuel systems on which we currently depend. We know that burning fossil fuels in our building and in our cars and in our buses increases air pollution and makes it harder for New Yorkers to breathe. The link between exposure to particulate matter, pollution for example, and the increased risk of that due to Covid 19 is now well established. That is why the de Blasio Administration has been and remains committed to addressing the underlying systemic social inequalities and inequities and health disparities exacerbated by climate change, and our work to do so

becomes more urgent every single day. Our office's long-term climate planning and sustainability work to reach carbon neutrality by 2050 is critical to the public health of New Yorkers. As we've shared with you before, we distributed 74,000 air conditioners to low-income seniors this summer through the Get Cool NYC program, responding to the need to protect our most vulnerable seniors from heat waves and from COVID-19. Our work to reduce fossil fuels in buildings also generates air quality and health benefits. In 2019, for the first time there was no reported sales of Fuel Oil No. 6 demonstrating complete phase out of this dirty fuel for the first time due to the Clean Heat Program. This change has resulted in a 95% decrease in sulfur dioxide or SO2 levels in neighborhoods across the city as measured by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Community Air Survey. As buildings work to meet the requirements of Local Law 97 and to reduce their reliance on fossil fuels for heating, air quality inside those buildings and outside those buildings will continue to improve. Our agency partners continue to make good progress on implementing these laws like Local Law 97, and we

are encouraged by last month's passage of Intro 1947, which will ensure that some more tenants in some rent regulated buildings will be able to reap the benefits of building retrofits. We still have a lot of work to do to reach our carbon reduction goals, and we are prioritizing this work with the help of our most vulnerable communities Top of Mind. We continue to need to connect offshore wind and other large scale renewable resources directly into New York City's power grid to allow us to reduce the need for in-city fossil generation, and to make sure our increasingly electrified buildings run on clean electricity. As we transition our way from fossil fuels for heating and power generation, utilities will no longer be able to justify building new fossil fuel infrastructure like National Grid's MRI pipeline through New York City's neighborhoods. We also need to continue our work on transportation especially as New Yorkers' transportation patterns change due to the pandemic. We must make sure that our public transit system remains reliable, accessible and clean and we need to ensure that people can move around the city in safe low carbon ways. We look forward to congestion pricing's

implementation to continue to support the MTA. Our office has prioritized the expansion of charging infrastructure to support electric vehicles and buses, but we will need to work with all of our partners across the city, state and federal government to truly build the infrastructure we need. Our office is also in the process of completing several studies to inform the work on carbon reductions in ways that prioritize public health. In collaboration with our local utilities, we are nearing the completion of a first of its kind study to determine pathways to decarbonize New York City's electricity grid, and we look forward to sharing the outcomes of those studies with the Council in 2021. We will continue to center health outcomes especially in our most historically burdened communities as we plan to prioritize future policies and programs. Our office looks forward with continued work together with Council to meet this crisis head on with innovative solutions, data driver action and fierce urgency to provide a livable future for all New Yorkers, and with that, I will now turn to my colleague Dr. Bavishi who will provide testimony on Intro 2149. Thank you.

DIRECTOR BAVISHI: Thank you Mark. Good morning. I'm Janey Bavishi, Director of the Mayor's Office of Resiliency. I would like to thank Chair Constantinides and Council Members Ulrich, Levin, Mechaca and Yeger for the opportunity to testify today. As we adopt New York City to the impacts of the climate crisis we strive to track our actions and transparently communicate climate impacts and our progress to local stakeholders and the public at large. Increasing the resiliency of such a dense populace and geographically is a herculean task that will take decades. These resiliency efforts are critical to safeguarding public health, supporting life and livelihoods and protecting critical infrastructure, housing and our natural environment. As you may know, the city already monitors many key metrics such as the acreage of restored wetlands, the square footage of rooftops that have been coated through the Cool NYC Program and the number of small businesses that have increased the resiliency of their facilities and operations with the help of Post-Sandy programs like Business Back. Additionally, we constantly monitor the progress of our many ongoing resiliency projects

from massive efforts like the six-mile long Rockaway's Atlantic Shore project to small but not less important projects like installing thousands of curbside lane gardens. This information is sourced from all across the city government with nearly every city agency's involvement in climate adaptation to some degree. Other key resiliency metrics are tracked by external parties in New York City to just Con-Edison as well as federal agencies like the National Oceanic Atmospheric and Atmospheric Administration, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. I would also like to highlight how the city has taken significant steps recently to uplift science and increase the public's understanding of climate hazards and the risks we face, we will face into the future. Earlier this year we proudly announced the fourth New York City Panel on Climate Change, which is the most diverse credentialed and multi-disciplinary panel yet. To support their work and strengthen our commitment to the science based, to science-based policy making, we also recently hired our first in-house climate science advisor to develop a climate science and risk communications program. Right now, our Climate

Science and Risk Communications team is working with the NCC City Agency's external partners and community-based organizations to perform a comprehensive assessment of climate knowledge gaps and community needs. This comprehensive input will form the basis of the city's first ever climate research agenda and shape the plan for MPCC fourth assessment cycle. Even as we develop this formal climate research agenda, our office has been strategically pursuing opportunities to fund data collection. In July, MOR and the Office of the Chief Technology Officer won a $90,000 grant to co-develop a real time flood center monitoring system in Gowans, Hamilton Beach and Howard Beach. This built on our work Developing Flood Watch a 70-day, a 7-day flood program to monitor chronic local flooding with our community and agency partners. We agree that more can and should be done to monitoring the city's progress as it relates to climate adaptation and resilience. Likewise, we agree that monitoring and evaluation related to climate change impacts must be communicated to the public in a clear, regular and transparent way with an emphasis on public health, environment justice and social

vulnerability. For these reasons the Mayor's Office supports the intention of Intro 2149. We look forward to working with Council in a cost-effective way to pursue these objectives and look forward to directly providing feedback and recommendations. In conclusion, I would like to thank the committee on Environmental Protection for allowing the Administration to testify here today. We look forward to your questions.

CHAIR CONSTANTINIDES: Well, I surely thank you both for your testimonies. Good to see you both even if it's virtual. I want to make sure that I recognize two of my colleagues who have joined this committee hearing today, Council Member Menchaca and Council Member Yeger both from Brooklyn, and with that, I'm going to begin my questions. What New York City educational institutions are monitoring climate currently?

MARK CHAMBERS: (pause) There we go. I did a little bit to unmute there. Thank you for your question. So, there are definitely multiple entities in academia that are constantly kind of working with the city to monitor. I think NYU and CUNY are two very significant institutions that are working

significantly with the city on this, but I will also pass this to my colleague Director Bavishi who may want to kind of talk more specifically around the monitoring questions and Intro 2149.

DIRECTOR BAVISHI: Sure. I'm happy to. So, Chair, thank you for the, for the question. You know, as I mentioned in my testimony we work with the New York City Panel on Climate Change and the panel represents a range of academic institutions both inside the city and in the metropolitan area you know that works to monitor climate in different ways and, and provide important research in science that really serves as a foundation for the Resiliency Program. Just a sampling of some of the institutions that are involved on the panel are Compton University, the New School, Rutgers and the list goes on. You know, I should also say that monitoring climate can mean penning many different things. We're working beyond our partners in academia, and really working with community to also monitor climate impacts. I mentioned the Flood Watch Program in my testimony. This is a great example of how we're really influencing community science, resident science to understand the impacts

of sunny day flooding in communities. So, you know, our work to monitor climate involves many partners. It involves city agencies, it involves academia, it involves federal agencies, our private sector partners like Con-Ed as well as our communities.

CHAIR CONSTANTINIDES: So, I'll come back to that in a minute. So, how are we currently monitoring biodiversity?

MARK CHAMBERS: I'm on the... there you go. So, biodiversity again relates in a lot of different, different components that tie directly to a lot of work that's happening both within our offices as well as the Parks Department as well as Planning as well as the Department of Environmental Protection. What we try to do is to be able to look at the, the holistic impact of biodiversity across all the spectrum of all agencies. So, a Tree Canopy is the perfect example of this. Parks is a great example of being able to analyze where exactly that those tree canopy components are being monitored and using geo-tracking to be able to display that information to the, um, to residents in the city. DEP also monitors the water quality associated with biodiversity. So, there's a handful of different

places in which those are tracked. All of those contribute towards the, um, the information that goes to the residents as well as to city partners around various forms of biodiversity.

CHAIR CONSTANTINIDES: Are any of the biodiversity indicators that developed into part of the Global Convention on Biological Diversity or assist with any other biological (sic) principles?

MARK CHAMBERS: Unmute?

CHAIR CONSTANTINIDES: Yes.

MARK CHAMBERS: It's your answer

CHAIR CONSTANTINIDES: (laughs) Okay. How are we monitoring social vulnerability current?

MARK CHAMBERS: Sure. So, actually, we'll actually turn this to Director Bavishi to talk about the social vulnerability, but one thing that we will also want to highlight is how that relates to our heat vulnerability, and that I think is a very good example of that.

DIRECTOR BAVISHI: Absolutely. The heat vulnerability and that is a great example of how we're monitoring social vulnerability, and how we're taking social vulnerability indicators into our count in our heat resiliency work. So, the index,

which was developed in partnership between Columbia and the Department of Health and the City Department of Health really overlays physical indicators of heat risk means light density in communities and the lack of education or green space and with social indicators of heat risk. You know things like race and poverty and we, we, um, have overlaid those, those different layers to really understand which populations in the city are the most vulnerable to the impacts of extreme heat in the city, and that data really draws and informs where our investments are made in terms of supporting communities to build resiliency to extreme heat.

CHAIR CONSTANTINIDES: So, then let me see if I can give an example. I know when we've been doing white roofs for a number of years throughout the city. How is the city monitoring the process of that program?

DIRECTOR BAVISHI: I am so glad you asked that question. That's a great example of how we're making sure the environmental benefits that we're developing through our resiliency investments are actually going to the places that are most vulnerable. So, you know, we've coated over ten

million square feet of rooftops over the last ten years. Since we've had this program for the last several years, we have really been trying to target those roof coatings in the most chief vulnerable areas and so we continue to use that data to drive where we are delivering these environmental benefits, and want to make sure that we're taking good social risks as well as physical risks into account.

MARK CHAMBERS: And I would also like to add that it...

CHAIR CONSTANTINIDES: Mark can also add.

MARK CHAMBERS: It, sure it, it builds upon that right, and so the important thing is to notice is that there are consistent layers that go on top of that that can allow for us to target these same areas with additional benefits. We're, you know, we're currently working on green roof tax abatement that would allow for areas that use similar social vulnerability as well as heat vulnerability and components to be able to benefit from increased tax abatements for installing green roofs. So, those would have a positive impact on the localized heat island, have a positive impact on the storm water

retention, and would also be able contribute towards these health indicators, which we're also tracking. So, I want to just make sure the point is clear that each of these things is not a standalone. Part of the work that is important is for our office is that a constant building and overlap and overlaying of different initiatives and efforts that allow for the most benefit for the most New Yorkers.

CHAIR CONSTANTINIDES: You also were...

DIRECTOR BAVISHI: I might even do it one time because I think this really underscores how MOI NOS coordinates to deliver these benefits. So, I, so I, so in addition to what Mark said, in addition to cool roof, we are also targeting street tree planting into these same neighborhoods, and we're also pairing these retrofits over physical environment with, um, with programmatic investments. Things like investments in community-based organizations in these same areas to advance the Via Body Program, which pairs volunteers with the most vulnerable residents of these communities so that we're checking in on them. It's just based on a basis tenet or neighbors helping neighbors. So, we're checking in on them on extremely hot days and

checking in on them during other disruptive events like the pandemic. We've are also training home health aids to check in on their, um, their patients as they're making their regular rounds so that they're detecting early signs of heat illness. It really goes to show, you know, that we need invest in our physical environment, but also pair those investments with programmatic interventions that can, that can help to keep people safe.

CHAIR CONSTANTINIDES: Just some. So, you guys have built on these questions. So, I'm going to ask the questions that builds on that, right? Do we have some sort of map that shows the public, right, where we're making these investments, where these plans are happening, where we've taken those light rules, where we say there seem to be more as we put together some sort of publicly available document that, you know the Council can see and we put on line and say: Look, these are all the work that we've done so far on light rules, and on street tree planning, the rain gardens. Here is how we've put then together. Here's the opportunities. Do we have that data so to keep it in that neighborhood

especially for people DJ communities who are very vulnerable?

MARK CHAMBERS: Yes. The...I think one of the ways in which we constantly are providing that information to the public is through our Annualized One NYC Progress Reports, which shows the layering of some of the questions you've asked. Now, I also want to point out that there are also specific tools that have been developed that tail specifically to a lot of the questions that you're asking. You know, there are tools available that showcase the city's geothermal potential for example where any New Yorker can look at any block where they live and find out whether or not that area is well suited for geothermal. There are tools available for New Yorkers to look and see whether or not their neighborhood is well suited for different types of renewable energy. It's called a Community Energy Planning Tool, and a lot of this has come out of the work that we've done with Council Local Law 64 and several others. So, yes, they're available. I think there's always room to create better tools and better products for people to be able to understand

and digest the information more clearly and have them collocated in one place.

CHAIR CONSTANTINIDES: And how are we integrating like Local Law 97 implementation into this? Right how are we on our green rooms, our retrofits for buildings, city-owned buildings in particular. How are we then, you know, sort of layering that on top of the work that we've already done in those same communities to help alleviate these, these challenges in those neighborhoods?

MARK CHAMBERS: Absolutely. So, there, there's a lot of great data stories to kind of tell that help us to kind of do that and I think that as we start to unpack and plan out in the, in the process which Local Law 97 has laid out, we are, we are investing in coming up with different ways in which we're going to communicate that. One of the tasks that the Local Law 97 support and the kind of community supporting this has undertaken is to find out some of the best ways to communicate some of that information. As we are going to start to get data in from, from buildings that are in compliance, we absolutely want that information to be readily available and to make sure that New Yorkers can

really see what they need to do to next based on their compliance. We already provided tools that give an estimate of any particular building in the city and what they would likely need to do to comply, and we can provide those resources, but I, like I said before we...we want to increase that, and I think one of the outputs is, that we're looking to tools that allow for anyone to be able to have a better estimate of not only where they can receive resources to help them do the retrofits, but what kind of retrofits are best suited for their particular program, and one other point that I'll make on that is that's also the rationale behind the expansion of the New York City Accelerator. The Accelerator is a, is a significant effort undertaken by our office to provide free technical assistance to building owners. The Mayor has tripled it in size to meet the kind of moment and challenge of Local Law 97, and as it stands right now, New Yorkers that are looking for help in compliance can go to the New York City Accelerator and ask questions. They will kind of come to resources, kind of come to financing opportunities, hand-hold them, meet them where they are to be able to start this

work as necessary, but again, more will come and I think better tools for everyone, digital tools will be to see if they can help in that.

CHAIR CONSTANTINIDES: I just want to hear some from you. I don't want to make this into a Local Law 97 compliance hearing. So, I will, I just want to hear what we're doing on sort of our end. Because city housing is a very ambitious goal that we have to meet, but I'm concerned that, you know, we only have four more years to comply, and, you know, where's the financial constraints of Covid, I want to make sure that we're still going to hit our goals. So, I'm not going to, I'm not going to belabor this point, but I do still put that on record that we...I definitely want to hear more about how we're going to meet these challenges based on the financial challenges that we're in. Just quickly before I...I don't know if any of my colleagues have any questions, but I'll just ask: You know, what, if any, climate resiliency indicators has the Administration already posed?

DIRECTOR BAVISHI: I hear they haven't been so good.

MARK CHAMBERS: Haven't been so good.

CHAIR CONSTANTINIDES: And before anyone wants to add on this officially, for those that they have been proposed, have they been subjected to public input?

DIRECTOR BAVISHI: So, we are monitoring various indicators both from a vulnerability perspective as well as well as a resiliency perspective. So, let me just talk a bit about both. You know, first of all, I just want to say that climate change is extremely cost-cutting. So, data sources are collected by a diverse range of organizations, as I've been... As I said in my testimony and to a previous risk medical...in response to a previous question. So, we are working with federal agencies like NOAH, USGS to you collected all related to weather and coastal flooding. We are also as I mentioned working with academic institutions as well as communities who also understand weather related impacts especially on sunny (sic) day, sunny day flooding, and I will also say that related to heat we have set up a monitoring network both indoors and outdoors to track heat related, just trends in temperature especially over the summer and again, in the most heat vulnerable neighborhoods as determined by our

heat vulnerability index. And we're also working with organizations like Con-Ed to collect data related to the electric grid, and then I will say that we're also tracking many, many indicators on the progress of our resiliency solutions and interventions. So, you know, things like cool roofs, things like business prop where progress on our Coastal Resiliency Projects. We are tracking those indicators and those are reported as Mark said previously in the One NYC Progress Report.

MARK CHAMBERS: And I'll just add a few more pieces to what is reporting again. I mentioned before the greenhouse gas inventory the electricity grid kind of monitoring and the energy mix, electric vehicle share of kind of new motor vehicles, trips that New Yorkers make, walking, biking, mass transit, single modes of transit, City Pension fund investments. I think Janey might have mentioned like our flood insurance policies, curbside waste diversion rates. There's a full gamut of and a lot of those are reported in One NYC regularly, and others are reported in other data portals.

CHAIR CONSTANTINIDES: At this time, I'm going to ask to see if any of my colleagues have any

questions? (pause) Alright, so I guess I'll continue then with, um, with my questions then. WE did talk a little bit about green roofs earlier. So, I just so quickly want us to just ...to back that up, and I'll let the Administration. Oh, and I want to make sure I acknowledge Council Member Steve Levin from Brooklyn who is here today as well. Thank you, Council Member Levin for being here. So, just quickly wrapping up onto the green infrastructure. Does the Administration have a policy procedure of protesting the City Green Infrastructure Resiliency Project? For example, the Bioswale Program? And if so, are they making it available, the publicly data available? If not, would you consider integrating this data into the Resiliency Indicator Database?

MARK CHAMBERS: So, yes to your question about there being standards for judging the efficacy of different green kind of infrastructure particularly as it relates to kind of storm water management to the Department of Environmental Protection? But I definitely think that there is improvement to your point that could be made to make sure that we are constantly improving and making sure that this data is really clearly articulated to New Yorkers so they

can understand how to view different green infrastructure that's put in place in their neighborhoods and understand whether or not they are performing well and have a consistent metric to review against that. So, we were happy to consider that, you know, improving the levels in which we report and also look at how those are guided.

CHAIR CONSTANTINIDES: With not seeing any of my colleagues... Steve, you... Steve has a question. I see his hand raised. So, I'll pass it over to Council Member Steve Levin.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: I'm glad you saw.

CHAIR CONSTANTINIDES: Largely not on schedule. My apologies.

CLERK: The time starts now.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you, Chair. I just want to ask about green roofs and, and how...what's our progress been in recent years on advancing the Green Roof Program and how...? How is it comparing to other cities? I know I was part of a panel going back a few years now maybe five years, you know with representatives from DC and Toronto and Philadelphia (Child heard speaking in the background) And you know, their program was...had a, had a much higher

uptake in terms of the Green Roof Program's tax incentives or, you know, you know, that is set at different dates. Can you speak a little bit about how, how are we looking at that and what we can be doing better really exploring adopting other mechanisms that they're using in other cities.

MARK CHAMBERS: Absolutely. Good morning to you Council Member Levin. You know, so, first again, I, you know the... thanks for your question. Also, thank you for referencing the work that was done in D.C. As many know, I, um, brought the Energy and Sustainability in D.C. before I came here, and so I had a lot of work in investing in that program. There are, you know, there's a lot of work that's happening in different cities that take advantage of their particular dynamics around stormwater management as well as around increasing the, the benefits that come along, the thermal benefits that come along from green roofs. Also, the green roof technologies increased over the last few years where you can have kind of thinner high performing green roofs which is great for the industry to expand. Here in New York City we have taken kind of two kind of components or tactics to be able to expand it

rapidly. Well, with this, one of the first things is the, the expansion and kind of passing of Local 92 and or last year with Council's guidance and help to be able to mandate that new construction, new roofs in New York City have to have either vegetated or solar as the component or both as the component of their structure. That dramatically increasing the amount of permits that are being sought through DOB to be able to increase the amount of green roofs and we expect to have some reporting coming out in the next year once we're about a year past when that law went into, into effect because we, we are anticipating there being a significant uptick that will also give us some more indications geographically around the city as to where there's been an uptick. But, there's a lot of desire for additional vegetation and a lot of benefits that come from that. The second thing as I mentioned previously is that we are working to implement the Green Roof Tax Abatement, which is something that was passed in the State, which will basically increase the amount of tax abatement you can get for installing a green roof in prioritized areas of the city. So, that will allow for us to create

additional incentive to be able to expand the amount of green roofs that are already going in. All and all the city is well suited for additional vegetative rooftop space to be utilized and we're kind of excited to be able to support both through technical education as well as through kind of financial opportunities for people to expand and do much more vegetative rooftop space. (child heard talking)

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you. What was the, the, um, tax abatement or what was...it was at $5.00 a square foot before. What is it now?

MARK CHAMBERS: Right, so, so for, um, so the $5.00 a square foot still stays and then the, um, the additional green roof tax abatement, there's a it's almost like an amplifier that will be in prioritized area throughout the city, (child talking) and if memory serves me correctly, I could check the data. I think it's somewhere in the neighborhood of like $13.00 to $15.00 a square foot. That being the additional zones we'll be able to add.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Why only a few zones going a around the city? (child talking)

MARK CHAMBERS: So, the, the way in which the state law was passed it wanted to be able to take advantage and say that there are certain areas that can benefit. Just to Council Member's Diaz's point earlier, there are certain areas that can benefit more greatly that are particularly vulnerable in the city through social indicators and as well as areas that are particularly suited for benefits due to the, the CSO the Combined Sewer Overflow. So, basically, some parts of the city if water retention happens it's better for the city at large. So, those areas should also be prioritized to help with water quality. So, those are the two state factors that kind of contribute to this, and so that's why the analysis has been done to design prioritized cells. (sic)

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay. So, prioritized. Why...if I may Chair, just why, why would it need to be, why would there need to be a prioritized zone? Like why not just have the whole city be a prioritized zone? Like in other words like I realized that there's, there's some personnel, you know, in kind of for lack of a better word bureaucratic time and energy that has to go into

doing this, and so if they're processing applications, but, um, and so I can understand there, you know, in that sense prioritizing certain areas, but the difference between 5 and 15 is...I mean when I talked, I forget the name of the gentleman that I was on this panel with from BC, but, um, you know, he spoke very convincingly of the fact that the DC abatement was $15.00 I think, which prescript like which makes a huge difference. It makes it a viable thing to do.

MARK CHAMBERS: Absolutely. I think that there is definitely increase. So, one to keep in mind is that there is an ultimately limited pool presently of the total Revasc (sic) that are, that are applicable. So, the desire from the State Legislation...

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: I agree

MARK CHAMBERS: ... is we make sure that those go to prioritized areas. I think if we expand that pool then I think yeah you're right, you want to expand the geography as well.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay, I agree with and it's a limited pool of rebate. (sic) Okay.

MARK CHAMBERS: Yes

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, so I would, you know I would implore out state colleagues to expand the pool of rebate. I realize that there's a plus. It ends up costing money to the state, but you get a money...You know, you get a huge return on investment with, with these green roofs.

MARK CHAMBERS: Absolutely.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Just in terms of its impact on, on, um, on our carbon footprint as a city. So, okay. I would love to talk with you more. I mean I know in one way that they did it in I think in Toronto where they mandated or if you don't, basically, if you don't do some type of green roof you have to pay into a fund as an alternative. So there it doesn't necessarily come out of our tax dollars, but is actually, the onus is then put on the developer.

MARK CHAMBERS: Right. I mean one of the points to kind of keep in mind that I also feel like as we start to see the implications of Local 1994 with a dramatic increase in a lot of the installed green roof square footage, we may also see significant impacts on the market that would bring costs down. So, hopefully that will also allow for there to be

like much more, much more consistency across the market and as well as like a larger breadth of coverage that would be great for the city to see.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Awesome. Okay, let's...I...I would like to have follow-up conversation with you if that's okay?

MARK CHAMBERS: Happy to do so.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Great, awesome. Okay, thanks. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you, Council Member Levin. Alright, so with that, I will end questioning. Do any of my colleagues have any other questions? Council Member Menchaca or Yeger? Alright. So, with that I'll end my questioning of the Administration. I want to thank you for your—all the work that you do. I hope that you and your families stay safe, and I wish you all a very happy holiday season, and again, you know, I'm hoping that we'll end 2020 in a much better way than 2020 has gone. So, I wish you all the safety as well as everyone else. (sic) Thank you.

MARK CHAMBERS: Same to you and thank you for having us and wish you the best this season.

CHAIR CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you.

DIRECTOR BAVISHI: Thank you, and now we'll turn our public testimony. I'd like to remind everyone that unlike our, unlike our typical Council hearings we'll be calling individuals one by one

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 January 3, 2021