



THE COUNCIL  
OF  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

CITY HALL  
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10007

September 13, 2022

Mr. Gregory Russ  
Chair and Chief Executive Officer  
New York City Housing Authority  
250 Broadway  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Chair Russ:

We write to you as Chairs of the New York City Council's Committees on Oversight & Investigations and Public Housing. The Council was dismayed to learn of the reports of tests showing arsenic in the water at the Jacob Riis Houses, the delayed response of your agency to this potential health crisis directly impacting City residents, and the subsequent retraction of the original test results.

Needless to say, NYCHA residents deserve far better. The conflicting reports of water contamination at the Jacob Riis Houses raise more questions that need to be answered, leaving residents understandably concerned and outraged. The Council intends to conduct oversight to ensure transparency and clarity regarding water quality and safety for all residents of NYCHA. To that end, our Committees are requesting that you provide the following information by no later than September 20, 2022:

Summer 2022 Water-Quality Issues at the Jacob Riis Houses<sup>1</sup>

- (1) The total number and dates of all resident complaints regarding water-quality issues at the Jacob Riis Houses, including 311 complaints, from May 1, 2022 to the date of this letter.
- (2) The dates and results of all water samples collected and water tests conducted in response to (1) above, including by LiquiTech, Inc. (LiquiTech) and Environmental Monitoring and Technologies, Inc. (EMT) in late August and early September 2022.
- (3) A detailed timeline of when the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), and the Mayor's Office were each notified of NYCHA's decision to collect water samples and conduct water tests at the Jacob Riis Houses and of the results of each such test, when and how results were communicated by LiquiTech and EMT to NYCHA and to NYCHA residents, including before and after the retraction of the results of the original tests conducted by LiquiTech and/or EMT.

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that the term "water-quality issues," as used in this letter, should be interpreted broadly to include arsenic, Legionella, and any and all other contaminants that may negatively impact the health of NYCHA residents.

Other Water-Quality Issues at NYCHA Developments from 2017-2022

- (4) The total number, location, and dates of all resident complaints regarding water-quality issues from January 1, 2017 to the date of this letter.
- (5) The threshold at which water-quality complaints trigger the collection of water samples and the conducting of water tests and, if no specific threshold exists, the criteria used by NYCHA that triggers such collections and testing.
- (6) The criteria NYCHA uses to determine whether or not to notify DEP and/or the DOHMH of water-quality complaints, water sample collection and/or testing.
- (7) The date, location, and results of all water samples collection and water tests conducted as a result of (4) and (5) above, including whether or not DEP and/or DOHMH were notified in each instance.

Questions regarding LiquiTech and EMT

- (8) A copy of the contracts pursuant to which both LiquiTech and EMT were originally retained by NYCHA to collect water samples and conduct water tests at NYCHA facilities, and any updates to these contracts.
- (9) Any and all other incidents where LiquiTech and/or EMT collected water samples and/or conducted water tests at NYCHA facilities, contaminants were found, and subsequent results showed “false” or different results by any measurement from prior test results.

Please send the requested information and any questions to the Council’s Director of Oversight & Investigations, Aaron Mendelsohn, at [amendelsohn@council.nyc.gov](mailto:amendelsohn@council.nyc.gov) or (212) 482-4240.

Sincerely yours,



Gale A. Brewer  
New York City Council Member, 6<sup>th</sup> District  
Chair, Oversight & Investigations Committee



Alexa Avilés  
New York City Council Member, 38<sup>th</sup> District  
Chair, Committee on Public Housing