

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON RECOVERY AND RESILIENCY

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January 19, 2017
Start: 10:14 a.m.
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HELD AT: 250 Broadway - Committee Rm.
16th Fl

B E F O R E: MARK TREYGER
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Rosie Mendez
Margaret S. Chin
Donovan J. Richards
Carlos Menchaca
Eric A. Ulrich
Steven Matteo

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

Jim Esposito, Deputy Commissioner
NYC Department of Emergency Management, NYCEM

Mitch Stripling, Assistant Commissioner
New York City DOHMH

Fred Valani, Chief Planning
NYC Fire Department, FDNY

Eli Fresquez, Assistant General Counsel
NYC Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities

Christina Farrell, Deputy Commissioner
Community Outreach & Emergency Preparedness Education
NYC Department of Emergency Management

Margi Trapani
Center for Independence for Disabled New York

Molly Krakowski, Director of Legislative Affairs
Jewish Association for Services of the Aged, JASA

Pamela Soto
NYC Environmental Justice Alliance

Deborah Greif

Edith Prentiss, Executive VP
Legislative Affairs
Disabled in Action, DIA

2 [sound check, pause]

3 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Okay, good morning.

4 My name is Mark Treyger, and I am the Chair of the
5 Committee on Recovery and Resiliency. We are here
6 today to discuss how the city assists vulnerable
7 populations in emergency evacuations. We'll also
8 hear Intro No. 1155, a Local Law in relation to
9 maintaining a voluntary registry of people who may
10 need evacuation assistance in the event of an
11 emergency. A significant number of vulnerable
12 individuals in the City experience greater risk
13 during emergency situations. Super Storm Sandy
14 underscored this problem. There were an estimated
15 75,000 people in poor health living in areas that
16 were inundated by flood waters and an estimated
17 54,000 more in communities that lost power. These
18 people faced additional dangers during the storm, as
19 they were less capable of gaining access to needed
20 care. People with a disability may include those
21 that face difficulty during—doing errands alone,
22 hearing, performing cognitive functions, walking, for
23 those that face challenges with self-care.
24 Vulnerable populations may include these individuals
25 as well as those who endure unique challenges to

2 their health and safety before, during and after an
3 emergency. This takes into account an individual's
4 age, inability to speak English or other barriers to
5 one's safety in emergency situations. While the city
6 has taken great strides in its emergency responses,
7 there is room for improvement. In a settlement
8 agreement between the City and the Brooklyn Center
9 for Independence of the Disabled, the Administration
10 agreed to satisfy roughly 100 deliverables to ensure
11 that the needs of individuals with disabilities are
12 adequately met during an emergency. Every New York
13 City resident should be safe and free from threats to
14 their health and wellbeing during emergencies. Intro
15 1155 can help those individuals who choose to
16 participate have convenience access to vital services
17 like shelters, food, medicine and water when an
18 emergency prevents them from accessing these
19 necessities safely in their homes.

20 The City Council has also passed several
21 laws to assist vulnerable individuals during
22 emergencies including Local Laws 58, 60 and 62 of
23 2013. We anticipate that this hearing will provide
24 us with insight into how the City is meeting the
25 requirements of these laws, and its settlement

2 agreements and to discuss how Intro 1155 can help to
3 bolster the City's commitments to providing safety
4 and security to some of its most vulnerable
5 populations. Thank you to those who prepared for
6 today's hearing including Anna Scaife, my Deputy
7 Chief of Staff, Committee Counsel Malaika Jabali and
8 Senior Policy Analyst Bill Murray. The committee
9 looks forward to hearing testimony today [coughs]
10 from New York City Emergency Management and other
11 members of the Administration, as well as advocates.

12 At this time, I'd like to call on the
13 Administration for the first panel, which I think is
14 here. I'd like to recognize my colleagues who are
15 here. The gold star really goes to the Minority
16 Leader Council Member Steve Matteo and as well as
17 Council Member Donovan Richards. I think that's it
18 for now. With that, we'll call—we have Mitch
19 Stripling from New York City DOHMH; Jim Esposito, the
20 Deputy Commissioner for Planning and Preparedness
21 from New York City Emergency Management; Chief Fred
22 Valani, FDYN; and I believe Eli Fresquez, the Mayor's
23 Office for People with Disabilities. Is that right?
24 So, if you could just step—please raise your right
25 hand. Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole

2 truth, and nothing but the truth in your testimony
3 before this committee, and to respond honestly to
4 Council Member questions?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: Yes.

6 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you. You may
7 begin.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: Good
9 after-good morning, Chairperson Treyger and members
10 of the Recovery and Resilience Committee. I'm Jim
11 Esposito, Deputy Commissioner, New York City
12 Department of Emergency Management. I'm joined here
13 today by colleagues as you just previously mentioned.
14 I'm pleased to be here to have the opportunity to
15 discuss the work that New York City Emergency
16 Management and our partners have undertaken since
17 Hurricane Sandy to be certain vulnerable populations
18 are aware of and use resource available to them
19 before, during and after emergencies. The specifics
20 and intent of Intro 1155 speak to the concerns both
21 counsel and Administration have on assisting
22 vulnerable populations before, during and after
23 emergencies. While it's difficult to assess the
24 number of vulnerable individuals living in our city
25 at any given time, MOPD estimates it within one

2 million range. With such a larger and ever-changing
3 number of residents, our agency continues to work on
4 their behalf. Yet, we do believe that a citywide
5 registry is neither logistically nor operationally
6 practicable. Registries are only useful as the
7 quality and timeliness of their information. They
8 are out of date immediately and, therefore, require a
9 team of dedicated individuals employed for the
10 purpose of constantly cross-checking information for
11 changes in status and relocation. In addition,
12 privacy issues hinder voluntary participation. As
13 you can imagine, any registry generally does not
14 capture individuals who do not sign up or persons who
15 are newly vulnerable such as those with a broken
16 ankle, a pregnancy, a recovery from a recent surgery,
17 or even those with an out-of-service elevator who
18 would not otherwise have classified themselves in such
19 a registry. Registries will not tell responders
20 which individuals need assistance, and which are
21 already receiving the care and attention they need
22 from a variety of other social service agencies, and
23 their other support networks. Registries can also
24 provide a false sense of safety for those who have
25 opted or as a result may not proactively act in their

best interest on the assumption that having once submitted their name onto a registry help will automatically come for them. Outdated registries waste valuable time of first responders in reaching out to people that are no longer at the given address, or who have already received assistance from another source. Their value is debatable because once FDNY or NYPD arrive on scene, they have protocols to check all units to determine the overall safety of buildings and building residents. New York City Emergency Management believes in more optimal ways to reach large segments of the city's vulnerable population and has diligently worked with our partners to incorporate planning into cohesive coordinating strategies. Following Hurricanes Irene and Sandy, disability advocates brought a suit against the City of New York citing gaps in its Emergency Prepared Services for people with disabilities. It is worth noting that during the trial, the disability advocates' own expert witness testified against the use of registries for the many reasons mentioned above including the difficulty of maintaining accurate and current information, wasted time for first responders, wasted allocated resources

as well as privacy concerns. After the trial, the City negotiated a detailed Stipulation of Settlement with the advocates whereby the City committed to improving its plans to accommodate people with disabilities in six areas: Emergency sheltering, post-emergency canvassing operations, accessible transportation, emergency communications, power outages, and high-rise evacuation. So to accomplish these improvements, the City created Disability Access and Functional Needs known as DAFN positions at key city agencies including New York City Emergency Management. Across the city, the core function of this expanded DAFN staff is to integrate the needs of people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs into their agency's emergency planning. Emergency Management has coordinated the disability community Advis-Advis-Advisory Panel, a collaborative entity through which the City gathers expertise, input and feedback from members of the disability community and its organizations regarding accessibility issues arising from current and future emergency planning proposals that impact people with disabilities. In addition, we have been working to make at least 60 of New York

City's evacuation centers and co-located shelters accessible to those with disabilities. The City has ongoing work in the areas of post-emergency canvassing, transportation, and high-rise evacuation. In regards to canvassing, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene developed a comprehensive scalable plan to provide canvassing services to identify individuals who need assistance in impacted areas after an emergency and connect them to support services. The Post-Emergency Canvassing Operation, also known as PECO, is a door-to-door canvassing operation staffed by City employees and volunteers meant to identify vulnerable individuals, determine critical unmet needs—needs arising after major disasters and refer those to partners for resolution. It facilitates equal access to post-emergency services that the City provides for individuals who are unable or who have difficulty accessing those service because of their disability or accessing functional needs. Canvassing provides a more appropriate solution for identifying residents post-incident who need the city's assistance by capturing information regarding these needs in real time. Thereby, ensuring that city resources are directed at

1 addressing verified current needs. So PECO maybe
2 activated for disasters that significantly disrupt
3 the delivery of essential services primary-primarily
4 electricity to more than 5,000 households for more
5 than 48 hours. So DOHMH will analyze the impact of
6 disasters, existing city vulnerabilities including
7 the location of vulnerable populations known to the
8 city, its mobilization cost and make recommendations
9 on a PECO activation to the Mayor's Office, who will
10 review that recommendation and make a determination
11 to-to activate the PECO effort. So for high-rise
12 evacuations NYCEM has been part of an FDNY led
13 interagency work group that includes DOB, MOPD,
14 NYCHA, subject matter experts and other agencies to
15 develop a work plan to address the evacuation needs
16 of people with disabilities in high-rise buildings.
17 So the NYCEM led Advance Warning System known as AWS
18 is designed to alert organizations who work with
19 people with disabilities and accessing functional
20 needs to various types of hazards and emergencies in
21 New York City that may affect people's independence
22 and daily lives. So participating organizations
23 receive public preparedness and emergency information
24 intended for use by individuals with disabilities and
25

1 access or functional needs. These organizations then
2 relay this information via email, text or direct all
3 to their clients and other agencies. As such,
4 emergency information is ultimately provided to
5 individuals through trusted pre-existing
6 relationships and specific to meet their need.
7 Often, that organization will play a role in that
8 person's emergency plan, as they provide an essential
9 service that enables their continued independence in
10 the community. At this time, there are currently
11 over 1,800 subscribers registered into the AWS system
12 representing approximately 1,000 unique
13 organizations. Any organization in the city that
14 serves these populations are strongly encouraged to
15 participate in the AWS system. During larger
16 emergencies such as snow storms or extreme heat NYCEM
17 also hosts conference calls with the 33 City and
18 State agencies and larger service providers to give
19 them direct information and guidance to pass onto
20 their clients. The Homebound Evacuation Operation,
21 known as HEO, coordinates evacuation assistance for
22 those homebound individual who will call 311 prior to
23 the arrival of a coastal storm. The evacuation
24 operations involve transportation and personnel
25

assets from DOE, FDNY and MTA Paratransit.

Individuals requesting assistance through the 311

system are asked a series of questions to assess

their mobility, which is then categorized into one of

three transportation assistance levels. The

personnel for each evacuation—the mobility is

categorized. So the use of these levels allows the

City to assign the appropriate transportation

resources and assistive personnel for each evacuation

request. The destination of these individuals will

be either an evacuation center for assignment to an

appropriate evacuation shelter or a hospital. In

addition, NYCEM now has an enhanced strategy for

publicizing HEO through various media including the

Mayor's press conferences, agency social media

outlets and Notify NYC. Notify NYC is the often

dedicated emergency notification system for the City,

and the means by which we communicate localized

emergency information quickly. It is available to

be receive via email, text message, Tweet and by both

landline and cell phones. So to supplement this

operation, we have it planned for a transportation

operations branch composed of subject matter experts

for ambulance—ambulet and bus operations. This group

2 coordinates the allocation of transportation
3 resources to meet evacuation requests pre-storm and
4 any relocation or transportation needs in the post-
5 event period. The scope of the transportation
6 operations branch ranges from assessing
7 transportation resource needs and executing contracts
8 for more resources or requesting mutual assistance
9 directing intake and managing requests from
10 healthcare facilities. So the branch also has the
11 ability to monitor—monitor HEO operations and
12 dispatch field supervision support for transportation
13 miss—missions.

14 New York City Citizen Corps. It's run
15 through New York City Emergency Management, and has
16 continued to engage community-based organizations
17 around readiness and emergency preparedness and
18 planning for people with disabilities, and holds an
19 annual symposium for agency planners, advocates and
20 other stakeholders to discuss important emergency
21 operations and plans with respect to planning for
22 people with disabilities.

23 The Ready New York Campaign—Campaign is
24 focusing on people with disabilities and accessing
25 functional needs, and will participate again in the

2 New York Metro Abilities Expo in April where an
3 estimated 6,000 people with disabilities, their
4 families and caregivers will attend. In partnership
5 with City Council and the Office of Recovery and
6 Resiliency, a report will soon be released with
7 recommendations for how community organizations
8 including those working with vulnerable pops can
9 better be prepared for future disasters. We have
10 also just launched a community-based planning
11 toolkit, which includes resources and guidance for
12 community organizations to integrate the needs of
13 people with disabilities into their planning. We
14 urge all council members to use this toolkit to
15 enhance and develop community planning with their
16 districts. We have copies here, and we're happy to
17 provide the Council.

18 So these are merely some of the examples
19 of the many ways in which NYCEM is working to address
20 the needs of people with disabilities and other-
21 others with access and functional needs during
22 disasters. There are many other agencies throughout
23 the city doing similar work. For example, the
24 Department of the Aging and the Department of Social
25 Searches-Services. They have a built-in system for

2 checkings on known at-risk pops via their case
3 management programs. So in sum, we agree with the
4 Council that the needs of the vulnerable are a
5 paramount priority and hope that our testimony today
6 attests to all the positive work we have undertaken
7 over the last four years to correct after action
8 items from previous coastal storms and evacuations.
9 So on behalf of the panel here, thank you for your
10 interest and continued support of the work that we're
11 doing in Emergency Management and the partnerships
12 that we have built. So, Councilman Treyger, we're
13 now happy to take any questions that you or the
14 Council might have.

15 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Than you very much,
16 and just to note, we've also been joined by Council
17 Member Margaret Chin. I just want to begin by noting
18 what prompted this legislation. It was through
19 personal experience what I witnessed and saw first
20 hand in my district particularly in Coney Island but
21 in the Brighton Beach sections where residents in
22 high-rise buildings were really stranded and stuck
23 for quite some time without power, and relief
24 organizations that arrived in our community days
25 after the storm set up shop. For example, one of

2 them set up a station at MCU Park in the parking lot
3 where the Cyclones play, but we asked them how do we
4 get water and supplied to people living on the 20th
5 floor of buildings that have no power and no lights.
6 Some suggested well, you know, use your legs, and you
7 carry it up there. So, look, I—I volunteered to the
8 best of my ability and—and many young kids,
9 teenagers, thank goodness for them, were handed
10 flashlights and went 20 flights of stairs, but it was
11 a guessing game of who was in this building, who
12 needed help. If—if somebody didn't open their door,
13 we had no idea who needed assistance. There were
14 people who were—who were in need of life saving
15 equipment who had no power. There were people who
16 needed water. There people who were hungry. People
17 who needed medicine, and it was—it was just complete
18 chaos, and—and then when I shared that story and
19 heard others in my community share the same or
20 similar stories with other members from other
21 communities, it's something very—we heard a common
22 theme that there was just no organization to this.
23 It was a complete guessing game of how to figure out
24 who needs help, who's where, who's what. And so this
25 is—this is simply—this—this legislation was just to

1 really drive home a discussion and an examination of
2 finding a—a better more organized and responsible way
3 to assist people in need. Now, simultaneously there
4 was a lawsuit settlement where the City of New York
5 had to basically agree on a certain set of—of
6 deliverables. It's my understanding that there were
7 about over 100 deliverables that the City had agreed
8 to. Out of that 100, how many have been delivered?

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: Well,
11 quite a number. Basically, they're broken down to
12 the six buckets that I mentioned in my testimony. We
13 agree, Council, that, you know, the spirit of wanting
14 to help the vulnerable population is our priority as
15 it is your priority. We're looking at a multi-
16 faceted approach, and one of the items involved in
17 that approach is, as I previously mentioned, this
18 post-emergency canvassing operation. There was gap
19 after Sandy, and this post-emergency canvassing
20 operation right now will consist of city staff and
21 volunteers who will go door-to-door to survey
22 populations in the event of a disaster determined
23 critical needs, those folks who need food, who need
24 water, who need meds, supplies even evacuation
25 assistance, and provide the necessary referrals to

2 the specific agencies responsible for fulfilling
3 those needs.

4 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Now, it's my
5 understanding that canvassing operation was supposed
6 to be completed and tested by August of this year. Is
7 that correct?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: It will be
9 ready for 2017. This is a DOHMH initiative, and I do
10 have a n Assistant Commissioner from Health who can
11 speak more to those specifics, but yes the PECO
12 operation will be available for the hurricane season.

13 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Well, yeah, this
14 was--this was more than an initiative. This was a
15 requirement. This was something the City had to work
16 with.

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: Yes, yes.

18 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And so in--in the
19 agreement it said August of this year.

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: Yes.

21 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So do you feel
22 that--do you feel confident that you will meet that
23 goal?

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: Yes, as an
25 Emergency Management Planner I do. Yes.

2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And what type of
3 information will you gather from the canvassing
4 operation?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: It will
6 consist of a number of items specific to the needs of
7 the individual, food, water, medicine, supplies. We
8 will find out, you know, what the specific need is of
9 the vulnerable who cannot—who does not have family,
10 who does not have neighbors who can assist. We're
11 going to be using city staff. We'll be using
12 volunteers to manage the transfer of that data, and
13 it will be passed along to those agencies and those
14 folks.

15 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Will that include
16 whether the person faces this—has a disability or not
17 or does that data--?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: Yes, that
19 will capture information required to appropriately
20 provide that individual with--

21 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: [interposing] And--
22 and what happens with this data?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: I'm going
24 to have to defer to DOHMH, but I do know it is a data

2 set that is electronically being captured, and it's
3 being acted upon.

4 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So if I may, what
5 exactly is the difference between what this
6 canvassing operation seeks to accomplish and the
7 purpose of--of the legislation? Because that's
8 exactly what my--

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO:
10 [interposing] Well, the legislation is asking fro a
11 list owned by the City, and we, as I said before,
12 have done many, many things in the last several years
13 to provide for the needs of the vulnerable
14 population. We do not believe a master list, which
15 is a snapshot in time, which is a--a static item
16 essentially.

17 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: But--but--but I
18 respectfully just ask your--this canvassing operation
19 could be a static item, too. I mean if you canvass
20 somebody, and you speak to somebody, and you take
21 down their information and--and God forbid something--
22 the pass away the following month, isn't that--isn't--
23 isn't that data also subject to changes and subject
24 to things happening and--?

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: Well,
3 we're meeting—we're looking to meet immediate need as
4 a result of a disaster.

5 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yeah, I'm—I'm just—
6 I'm not sure on the differences between what we're
7 trying to accomplish and what this canvassing
8 operation will seek to accomplish. Let me also go
9 back to the number of shelters currently that are
10 accessible to people with disabilities. In the
11 agreement it stated that you would have I think 60
12 shelters that are just for people with disabilities,
13 and I believe that there was supposed to be 30 by the
14 end of this month. How many are currently accessible
15 to people with disabilities?

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: I don't
17 have that current information. Does MOPD? Are you
18 aware? I—I believe we're around the 20 mark right
19 now. We're working diligently with all of our agency
20 partners to make these evacuation centers and co-
21 located shelters accessible to people with
22 disabilities.

23 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So this is a major
24 area of concern because you stated in your testimony
25 that there's approximately one million people in New

2 York City that would fit in the category of facing a
3 disability or vulnerable, and to hear that there's
4 only 18 or 20 or so shelters that are accessible to
5 those individuals, that's very concerning.

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: But you
7 have to understand that there are different types of
8 disabilities, and not—you know, we're not looking at
9 the totality of the vulnerable population needing
10 this type of evacuation assistance and/or shelters
11 because not everybody will live in the impacted zone.
12 This is something that is scalable certainly, and it
13 is incident-specific.

14 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Do you have data
15 how many are in the impacted zones?

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: We do have
17 data. I don't have it available right here.

18 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I—I'd appreciate
19 that, that information. I could tell you my district
20 pretty much is all of it in the impacted zone, and we
21 had tremendous number of seniors and people with
22 disabilities stuck, stranded and had difficulty
23 evacuating during and after the storm. So, I mean
24 I'm pretty sure that a good chunk of my district is—
25 is in—is in that data, but describe—tell me these

2 shelters? What type of facilities are these
3 shelters?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: Well, the
5 evacuation centers with their associated shelters are
6 essentially DOE public school facilities.

7 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So isn't that
8 already a major problem that we have. DOE public
9 schools that are not accessible to people with
10 disabilities, and I would go a step further and—and
11 say that these probably the same sites where people
12 go to vote, and they don't have access as—as well.
13 So this is—this is really a—a layered problem that
14 during emergencies people have difficulty entering
15 these facilities. During school people with
16 disabilities have difficulty entering these
17 facilities, and their parents want to be involved in
18 the school, and I guess they can't and people want to
19 vote. So this is a real problem, and I—I think that
20 the city in its capital plan needs to focus on this,
21 and this is something we—we have to bring up as well
22 with the Mayor's Office. I mean this is a major-
23 major issue. Speaking of other barriers, one thing
24 that I noticed in my district as well, and I'm sure
25 it's relevant to other members, too, is the issue of

2 language access. In your testimony, you mentioned
3 this system known as AWS, the Advanced Warning
4 System. It's designed to alert organizations to work
5 with people with disabilities access and functional
6 needs. Does these organizations then relay this
7 information via email, text or call to their clients?
8 Do you know if this information is accessible in
9 different languages?

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: Yes, we
11 have it accessible right now in over 16--over 14
12 different languages as well as ASL. So, you know,
13 we're working hard to increase that as well, and a
14 point that you previously made about these schools,
15 you know, I'll defer to MPD, but we have been working
16 tirelessly to address all of your concerns
17 Councilman. So trust me in that this number of 60
18 will be met, and we're working diligently with the
19 plaintiffs and the courts to ensure that fact.

20 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right, well, but
21 it's going to require making these structures
22 accessible--

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: We
24 understand.

2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: --and that's going
3 to require capital money.

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: And it-it
5 has been allocated, Councilman.

6 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: This is--this is a
7 two-year-- I'm sorry. [background comments] Yeah,
8 well, staff has provided me with--with some data that
9 there were an estimated 75,000 people in poor health
10 living in areas that were inundated by the flood
11 waters. So, and about 54,000 people who the
12 communities that lost power. So this is--that's an
13 infinite amount of people, but I'm just--the point I
14 was making is that in order to make a school
15 accessible to people with disabilities, you have to
16 build structures. You have to build those ramps.
17 You have to do--you have to do things that requires
18 capital commitment, and I'm not sure how--did they
19 brief you on that? Have you briefed the DOE on that
20 or briefed the Mayor's Office on that? This is very
21 important stuff.

22 ELI FRESQUEZ: Chairperson Treyger, my
23 name is Eli Fresquez. I'm with the Mayor's Office of
24 People with Disabilities.

25 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right.

2 ELI FRESQUEZ: Thank you for having me
3 today.

4 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Sure.

5 ELI FRESQUEZ: So I've been working very
6 closely with the New York City Emergency Management
7 particularly on some of the evacuation centers and
8 the associated shelters. We have approximately 400
9 shelters throughout the city. We have 64 evacuation
10 centers. We've been working on trying to make these
11 more accessible for everyone, and it's—it's a big
12 effort like you had mentioned. So we're working very
13 closely with the Department of Education on this plan
14 to make all the evacuation centers accessible. We've
15 also been working with School Construction Authority
16 very closely, and—and as you mentioned, it's a—it's
17 challenge because you have to go in, and you have to
18 do some construction work for the vast majority of
19 the schools, many of whom are—are quite old. They
20 date before the Americans with Disabilities Act. So
21 it's a lot of retrofitting. It's a lot of going
22 back, and making sure that ramps are being placed in
23 restrooms, making sure that ramps are placed in the
24 front of a—of a school to make it fully accessible.
25 It's—it's a challenging process. We've worked with

2 an outside vendor that comes in and actually does a
3 very exhaustive survey where they review the
4 congregate spaces that we will be using in the
5 shelter. For example a cafeteria or a gymnasium, and
6 also the restrooms. Once we get that--that survey of--
7 of potential barriers, we then review that with our
8 working group. Again the Department of Education
9 School Construction Authority, the Mayor's Office of
10 People with Disabilities and New York City Emergency
11 Management, and then we go and actually do the work
12 and the Department of Education will go onto the
13 site, and--and do the--the remediation if it's needed.
14 It's--it's a challenging process, but as Deputy
15 Commissioner Esposito mentioned, we are on our way to
16 make all of our evacuation zones a success.

17 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: But this decision
18 is about two years old. So this is not like a
19 relatively new challenge. This has been around now
20 for--for quite some time. What--what are the--what is
21 the roadblock right now? The City in the past two
22 years has increased spending by billions of dollars.
23 This I know.

24 ELI FRESQUEZ: I--I agree. We're--we have
25 all sorts of--

2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: [interposing] So-so
3 you can't say it's a money issue because you have
4 money to -you-you spend money.

5 ELI FRESQUEZ: Right.

6 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: What is the
7 roadblock?

8 ELI FRESQUEZ: So the ADA was passed in
9 1990. It's been around for 26 years now, 27, and so
10 I-I share your frustration that we would have liked
11 for many schools to have built in compliance with the
12 ADA when they were first-when they were constructed
13 after the-the ADA was passed. So it's-it's-I share
14 your frustrations trying to go back. You know, some
15 of the challenges that we have found is the
16 Department of Education is massive, and they have to
17 allocate contractors and they only have a certain
18 number of contractors often that can do certain work.
19 So, it's-it's been a learning experience and an
20 evolving experience. We started off slow and we have
21 ramped up, and we're starting to move much quicker.
22 The number of accessible schools is increasing as-as
23 we work out the surveying process, and the
24 remediation process.

2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: But I just want to
3 end this point by saying that this is not—this was
4 not a suggestion. This—this is a legal requirement.
5 We have to do this. We are—the City of New York is
6 not in compliance with a number of—of—of mandates,
7 and that's a problem. And as I mentioned, this is a
8 problem that—that reverberates beyond certainly
9 safety is our—our main goal, but I'm sure that if
10 there are parents with disabilities, they want to
11 come see their—speak to teachers in that school, or
12 if there are people who want to go vote, and it—it
13 presents a lot of challenges and problems here.

14 Another area that was agreed upon was the
15 creation of a high-rise building evacuation task
16 force. Can you tell me about—has that task force
17 been created? Has—has it met?

18 CHIEF VALANI: So that's actually a two-
19 part piece. The high-rise task force was made up of
20 multiple city agencies as well as subject matter
21 experts from the plaintiffs and other agencies in
22 cooperation met numerous times over the course of a
23 year to develop a—a group of recommendations. Those
24 recommendations are then passed off to an
25 implementation committee that examines the

2 recommendations, makes decisions on which are
3 achievable and realistic, and then moves to start to-
4 to make those recommendations into reality. The
5 High-Rise task force completed its work I believe
6 February of 2016. The Implementation Committee is
7 only a few months old. It is made up of sub-work
8 groups into different areas, and I don't have a
9 deadline for those deliverables yet, but we have not-
10 we're not even close to there yet.

11 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So this task force
12 has not really been created?

13 CHIEF VALANI: The task force itself has
14 been created and disbanded. The task force developed
15 recommendations that were then passed off to
16 something called the--

17 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: [interposing] Which
18 agencies--

19 CHIEF VALANI: --the Information
20 Committee.

21 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: --which agencies
22 were a part of that?

23 CHIEF VALANI: The Fire Department,
24 Emergency Management, Department of Buildings, NYCHA-

2 ELI FRESQUEZ: [off mic] [interposing]
3 Police Department.

4 CHIEF VALANI: --Police Department,
5 Plaintiff's Experts--

6 ELI FRESQUEZ: DOE, 311 and many, many
7 and HPD?

8 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Were--were any high-
9 rise residents a part of this group?

10 ELI FRESQUEZ: We did have representatives
11 from Stuyvesant City, from Gateway Plaza who were
12 referenced as part of this--

13 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: [interposing] I--and
14 I just have to take issue that this was not brought
15 to my attention. I have a number of high-rises in my
16 district, and I'm pretty sure the--the neighboring
17 districts next to me would have--would have loved to
18 have and couldn't say this initiative comes up
19 frequently. The other--again, challenge we face in
20 many of those in my district is that people speak
21 different languages. So this would have to be kind
22 of translated to them as well, but they have a lot to
23 say on--on this subject matter. So, there is an
24 agency task force, but how does that reach the

2 community level? How can the community be engaged to
3 provide feedback to this group?

4 ELI FRESQUEZ: In the Implementation
5 Committee we will be engaging with the community and
6 in the recommendation committee that Chief Valani
7 just spoke about, we did have plaintiff's expert as
8 part of that committee. So we did have a broad
9 representation of the vulnerable population's
10 viewpoint with respect to high-rise evacuation.

11 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: But were these
12 folks victims—did they go through Super Storm Sandy
13 because this is kind of—we want that data. We want
14 that information. People who—who lived through that
15 to be able to speak to the government directly and
16 say, this is what happened. This is what—this what
17 might, this is what didn't happen, and this is what
18 should happen.

19 ELI FRESQUEZ: Yeah, we have Disability
20 Advisory Community panel that NYCEM hosts, and we do
21 have representation on that committee.

22 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right. I—I just
23 thank it's important that we close the gaps that we
24 reach those communities that were directly impacted
25 as well. Certainly I—I think it's great to have

2 advocated, and that's wonderful, but let's hear from
3 people that actually lived through this.

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: Yes.

5 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And make sure that
6 their feedback is—is being heard.

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: Uh-huh.

8 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I don't know if
9 any—I have some more questions. Any of my colleagues
10 have any questions. Council Member Donovan Richards.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: How you doing?

12 Thank you, Mr. Chairman for this very important
13 hearing. I had a few questions I wanted to run
14 through. So obviously you're saying to do—[off mic,
15 pause]—Did you turn the mic off? Okay, here we go.
16 Alrighty. Alright, it's working now. Alrighty. So
17 obviously you said it's difficult to do voluntary
18 registry, correct? So you wouldn't take them
19 necessarily?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: So,
21 voluntary registries are—you know, we do not believe
22 it is as efficient as the multi-faceted approach that
23 we took here over the past several years. We worked
24 very, very hard to identify what the needs of the
25 vulnerable community, what the needs of the

2 vulnerable population would be at a time of the
3 disaster. A list owned by a government is
4 problematic in itself. Expert witnesses have
5 testified against it, and after examining this list,
6 and its functionality, it's—the ability to
7 operationalize it we believe that at this point in
8 time in New York City the best way and the best
9 approach is what we had previously—

10 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARD: [interposing]

11 Okay. So let's move away from the voluntary
12 conversation. So obviously the city—city-owned
13 buildings in particular, HPD has buildings in the
14 city. You have NYCHA housing. You have Mitchell-
15 Lamas, right? So I'm interested in know why would it
16 be difficult to track individuals especially if you—
17 if they—if they have to renew their leases, they're
18 already within the city system. I would assume the
19 city would know if there are disabled people living
20 in units already, right? So I'm interested in
21 hearing a little bit more about do you know at this
22 moment in case of an emergency if I pointed to one of
23 my public housing developments, if I pointed to an
24 HPD owned building, would you know how many people
25 are disabled within those particular buildings now,

2 and—and would they need that—need assistance then
3 with an evacuation? And, let's not forget—and I
4 represent the Rockaways, electricity went out during
5 the storm. Also, we had no cell phone service until
6 I got elected in 2013 in certain parts of my
7 district. So how would seniors make a call at 311 if
8 the telecommunications is knocked out in the first
9 place? So I'm very interested in hearing how are you
10 looking to combat that, and let's just imagine that
11 telecommunications goes down, how do we reach
12 vulnerable individuals?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: Okay, let
14 me take that, and then I'll pass it to the Fire
15 Department.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: [interposing]
17 Or answer that once. (sic)

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: So let me
19 see where my—okay, we have a—as I mentioned before a
20 multi-faceted program. We—we'll begin with our
21 public messaging efforts.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Okay. TVs were
23 out, phones were out.

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: Well, I'm
25 talking pre-incident.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Right.

3 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: This is
4 very, very important. This community based--

5 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Uh-huh.

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: --
7 planning. This is reaching out beforehand through
8 all of the, you know, factors and all of the
9 organizations that I'm about to go through just for
10 your information. I mean this is extensive.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Okay.

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: You know,
13 we have--at the top we have, of course, the Mayor's
14 Press Conferences, the Press Office, New York City
15 Emergency Management and Joint Information sector.
16 We make elected calls. We have multiple city agency
17 contracts. We have social media outlets. We have
18 access and functional needs working groups. We have
19 volunteer organizations active in disaster. We have
20 Notify NYC, which is a--you know, after 10 years we
21 only 500,000 registrants. So we could use the
22 Council's support to increase this number
23 dramatically across the city. This way we can get
24 out emergent information to people in need before
25 disasters occur. We have our AWS that we had

2 discussed before where we have over 1,000
3 organizations with direct contacts to the people they
4 serve. We have Citizen Corps in the city here. It's
5 coordinated by NYCEM. It's an initiative to bring
6 together volunteer programs, community non-profit
7 organizations, private sector, government agencies to
8 promote emergency preparedness at the local level
9 through training, outreach and volunteer services.
10 So, you know, we currently have over 5,000
11 organizations enrolled in Citizen Corps. As I
12 mentioned before, we have the Fire Department engaged
13 with 311, who had enhanced their system
14 technologically. They hired an additional 30 to 40
15 call takers. They received training in, you know,
16 communicating with the vulnerable pops, and we have a
17 whole homebound evacuation operation that we can rely
18 on for those people who cannot evacuate themselves in
19 a--what we would call a blue sky environment before
20 the incident should happen, you know.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: [interposing]

22 So I'm--okay so I'm very happy to hear that, and
23 obviously we know you were working towards those
24 changes after the council press from 2013 on. But
25 I'm interested in knowing post-storm now what does

2 that look like. So individuals decide not to
3 evacuate. Telecommunications is down, salt water has
4 impeded—I mean encroached on our water lines—our
5 telecommunication lines. Do you know where our most
6 vulnerable are at in that situation?

7 CHIEF VALANI: So if we're talking about
8 post-emergency that's where PECO and the Post-
9 Emergency canvassing operation comes in. It's a
10 systematic door-to-door canvass of all residents in
11 the affected areas to assess their need. Not
12 necessarily everyone is going to be in need of city
13 assistance to either evacuate the building or
14 transport themselves to an evacuation center, or some
15 other location as they would choose to evacuate to.
16 We know that we had people who made decisions not to
17 evacuate particularly in—in—in advance of Sandy that
18 after the storm realized that their conditions were
19 just untenable, and at that point wanted to evacuate
20 and there were a host of—of difficulties in—in
21 identifying those people, how we were going to get
22 them out of the building, and how they were going to
23 be transported to—to an evacuation shelter or to some
24 place else where they gain transportation to some
25 place else to go rather than a shelter. We believe

1 that the—and I won't talk about the entire PECO I
2 think because that's really a Department of Health
3 thing. We support it by providing the Fire
4 Department's Incident Management team, and helping to
5 manage the activities of PECO rather relying on a
6 static list of people that at a point in time
7 identified themselves as vulnerable, actually goes
8 door-to-door to—to assess who at this moment is
9 vulnerable. I may live on the 15th floor of—of a
10 high-rise building, and don't consider myself
11 vulnerable in any way until perhaps the elevator goes
12 out, and I have not water and I have no heat, and I
13 find it difficult to make it down 15 flights of
14 stair. So I didn't make myself known on a list. The
15 PECO operation will now identify my need, assist me
16 in—in transporting me out of the building or the Fire
17 Department is working with the Emergency Management
18 now to develop a post-emergency transportation plan
19 that didn't exist at Sandy that would identify our
20 transportation resources and staffing to help
21 actually carry if necessary people out of the
22 building to an appropriate type of vehicle that could
23 transport them to an evacuation shelter.
24

2 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: And can I just
3 ask—so how has communication been with building
4 owners in particular? Are they linked into this
5 conversation at all because I would assume even for
6 those not in—non-city-owned buildings that there is
7 management in some of these buildings. So how is the
8 city coordinating in advance ways to communicate with
9 building owners who own properties especially high-
10 rises in our communities.

11 CHIEF VALANI: In process. NYCHA was an
12 active partner during the High-Rise Task Force
13 meetings. There was a subgroup that worked on other
14 residents that met with representatives of building
15 management organizations to talk about ways that we
16 can improve information flow to them, and as part of
17 the Implementation Committee once that gets a little
18 further along, we'll be engaging a host of
19 organizations that—that represent not just
20 residential high-rises but all high-rises.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Uh-huh, and
22 then PECO, so obviously we haven't had a storm of the
23 magnitude of—of Sandy. What preparations—are there
24 drills going on in local communities? Is there
25 practice or--?

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: [off mic]

3 We're going to go to adjust for this. (sic)

4 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: And how many
5 staff PECO? Is that the--the organizations you--you
6 spoke of 5,000--I think you said 5,000 people. So who--
7 who is a part of PECO.

8 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER STRIPLING: So
9 Mitch Stripling, Assistant Commissioner of Health
10 Department. I can speak to some of that. So PECO
11 has been a---a program since 2013 after Sandy. We've
12 had drills and exercises each year. So we do partner
13 with building management for those drills. We've
14 done them in Harlem. We've done them in--in the
15 Rockaways and other places. We have about 30,000
16 city staff on a--a list for PECO who have been
17 notified of their role of that. We've trained about
18 2,000 people, and we've trained 900 people in the
19 Health Department in the PECO leadership positions.
20 So the Health Department itself would stand up and
21 then run the--the teams of canvassers that would go
22 out, the places that canvasses muster to go out. So
23 we've conducted those trainings and exercises, and
24 between now and August of 2017, we'll be having a
25 number of drills including setting up a canvassing

2 assembly point where people will come you, and a dry
3 run using the—the tablets and data systems that—that
4 Deputy Commissioner--

5 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: [interposing]

6 And how do we find out about these particular drills?

7 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER STRIPLING: Well,
8 we've been working with the Mayor's Office on-on
9 those things. I think we're—we're happy to notify
10 the—we—we have notified a couple of council members
11 when they happen in their districts, but I don't
12 think it's been a general notification.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Okay, so we
14 would appreciate that, and then my last question is
15 on the AWS. So this organization I think is tasked
16 with working with seniors and people in local
17 communities. Interested in knowing what has outreach
18 looked like with AWS? Are you hitting senior seniors
19 and—and if not, you know, we—you should utilize us
20 because many of us have a direct connections with
21 centers in our districts, and perhaps the thought
22 should be to do some sort of outreach events in
23 advance of storm season. And I haven't seen any of
24 this so I'm just unsure of what's going on. So, you
25 know, please utilize our offices to—to at least do

2 some outreach, and we would be willing to be helpful
3 with that.

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: Yes, as I
5 mentioned before, AWS we hit over a thousand
6 organizations and, you know, leading up an event such
7 as a coastal storm we do make elected calls, and we
8 are pushing out information. You know Emergency
9 Management along with all city agencies we start
10 monitoring these things about a week before it's
11 coming up the coast, and we watch this daily. We're
12 in conference with NOAA, the National Oceanic and
13 Atmospheric Weather reporting service, and we
14 carefully, you know, target areas that would be
15 affected, and collective calls go out throughout the
16 entire city. We essentially are communicating with
17 43 city agencies, and an equal number of private
18 stakeholders and organizations as well.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: No, we
20 appreciate that, and I think under the last several
21 threatening storms that we saw possibly that we
22 thought could have hit our coast. You've really
23 stepped up communication, and we appreciate that.
24 I'll just end by saying I still don't see a reason we
25 couldn't figure out a more laser focused strategy

2 around NYCHA housing especially city-owned sites
3 because that information has to be accessible to the
4 city. It's your buildings, and you should know in
5 each unit you have a person disabled, respiratory
6 issues, breathing issues. You know, there's just no
7 excuse I think when it's a city-owned building.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: No.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: I know it's
10 hard to gauge a city of eight million people, but
11 where we have data, it's no reason we should not be
12 able to com-to comprise that information and be able
13 to utilize it in advance in post-storm. [background
14 comments]

15 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER STRIPLING: [off
16 mic] So-so the Health Department me. So the Health
17 Department and NYCHA have a partnership that's-
18 [banging] Oh, thank you. [on mic] Thank you-an
19 implemented partnership where now if power is-is lost
20 in a NYCHA facility part of the PECO program is the
21 construction of the data warehouse where data like
22 that about residents can be-can be put into that for
23 analysis. So NYCHA has done extensive analysis of
24 their residents, and so the Health Department and
25 NYCHA jointly committed that they would do canvassing

2 operations that were based on that resident data as
3 you describe based on the significant information
4 NYCHA does have about its residents.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: I will say—oh,
6 so I just had a power outage in one of my
7 developments last week, and it—I know it's touchy
8 because it just turned into a public-private
9 partnership, and I want to thank OEM. OEM was on the
10 ground, they helped, but we didn't see any canvasses.
11 There was no strategy around that. We went door-to-
12 door ourselves. So I'm just putting out there to say
13 that in the future, if PECO really does exist—or I'm
14 not saying it doesn't—that there needs to be better
15 coordination and council Member should know who to
16 contact at PECO, and like I said, my staff and I went
17 door-to-door ourselves last week, 1,400 units. No
18 electricity. So just putting that out there

19 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER STRIPLING: What
20 was the outcome?

21 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: We—we got it up
22 and running within 24 hours, but I think we were
23 around 48 or 24 to 48 hours people were without
24 electricity. So just putting that out there. No one
25 came and knocked doors with us.

2 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER STRIPLING: This
3 is--to be clear on that--that deployment
4 specifications for PECO as the program was designed
5 in 2015, it's for when power--the--the power trigger
6 has to be an estimated length of 48 yours or more for
7 the PECO to be notified.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: We definitely
9 were heading toward 48 hours. So, okay. No problem.
10 We--we got generators--

11 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER STRIPLING:
12 [interposing] And that's to alleviate the problem.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: --but just--but
14 we should be able to coordinate.

15 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: It is--and I--I thank
16 the Council Member.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: No, that's great
19 points and questions. Does this extend to boilers or
20 just power? Because my first year in office just
21 like my colleague, I spent--my office and I spent
22 quite a bit of time canvassing on NYCHA buildings
23 that had no power because of temporary--post-Sandy,
24 and one of the things that we saw was that there was
25 a tremendous language barrier between the information

2 that NYCHA was putting out, and the people that
3 didn't speak English, and so my staff—I speak
4 Russian. My staff speaks Chinese. We have to
5 translate information, and again I—I—I don't mind
6 helping or assisting in that effort, but we should be
7 better prepared as well. So I—I didn't see all these
8 great things in action. I—we had a kind of do it on
9 the fly. And I just—I just want to just—and my
10 colleague has—Council Member Chin has a question as
11 well. I just want to say that the people that
12 testified against the registries I believe were—many
13 of them were testifying against mandatory registries.
14 This is a voluntary registry. I—I completely
15 understand respect their valid privacy and I fully
16 accept that, and I understand that. But these are
17 folks who choose to say that in the event of an
18 emergency I—I need—I need help just like you're
19 saying that they can call 311 and request
20 transportation. I'm sure that data is kept
21 somewhere. I'm sure that you track who you're
22 sending a vehicle to. So I—I just think that if—if
23 there is a better way that—that—that the Admin knows
24 of then share with us. But we're trying to create a
25 system that is not just simply shooting in the dark

2 because of all the things I've heard—I read some
3 really nice—nice things, I still don't see a
4 centralized, organized way to reach as many people as
5 possible in the event of an emergency. And so I
6 guess we're open to suggestions here, too, but the
7 status quo is just not acceptable. My colleague
8 Council Member Margaret Chin has questions.

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: Council
10 Member, can I just address that one second. I just
11 want to bring to your attention that we have
12 benchmarked what goes on across the country and, you
13 know, with Intro 1155 and the great intent it has we
14 found one major city who actually has a voluntary
15 registry, and that is the city of Chicago. The city
16 of Chicago has 27 million people and that voluntary
17 registry has on it today 300 plus people. The
18 Voluntary Registry system that we see operating in
19 Chicago is more of an academic exercise than anything
20 else. It is not operational. It's not functional,
21 and we believe once again that the multi-faceted
22 system that we have in place now is probably the best
23 way to go. I hear what you're talking about. We
24 respect what DOHMH is currently doing with data set.
25 We look to—we are looking forward in the future as

2 technology develops and we can integrate that into
3 different systems we have available in the city to
4 use that information to be more precise to target
5 people who are, in fact, vulnerable, but one of the
6 biggest components of our program right now is this
7 enhanced outreach that we're using, and all of the
8 efforts and organizations that we have to spread this
9 message pre-incident because evacuations occur before
10 the incident happens, and after the incident happens.
11 During the incident, there are no evacuations. There
12 are simply rescues that take place. So this is a
13 distinction that you need to know.

14 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right, and—but the
15 point I'm making is that when we had to go up 23
16 flights of stairs—

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO:
18 [interposing] Understood.

19 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: --it is extremely
20 cumbersome even for a young person to just walk
21 around with a flashlight, and try to figure out—and
22 there's many apartments on each floor, and to knock
23 on each and everyone of them, and to go up—up and
24 down this—and carry heavy things. There's got to be
25 a better way.

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: And the
3 better way is the PECO that we have now identified
4 and established to do that in the future.

5 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: But the point is
6 that the PECO is going to give you some data.

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: Correct.

8 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And are you going
9 to just toss the data out after you get it?

10 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER STRIPLING: [off
11 mic] Well, let me--

12 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yes.

13 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER STRIPLING: --
14 address that, too. [on mic] PECO is collecting the
15 data obviously right after an emergency.

16 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Correct.

17 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER STRIPLING: So we
18 would collect it and use it to meet those needs. You
19 know, we would not consider--that's a secure data set.
20 We're collecting personal health information on that--
21 on that data in a lot of cases because we need
22 medical conditions for doctors and--and medication.

23 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: But the resident--
24 can the resident decline to give you information?

2 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER STRIPLING: The
3 resident can decline it, but the resident is giving
4 it under emergency purposes, and that means the city—
5 the city can't—couldn't then convert it into a
6 permanent registry because there are different
7 aspects of privacy.

8 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So let me ask you a
9 question. So let's say you—you have PECO going on.
10 You have this canvassing operation happening for a
11 power—a major power outage right, and then heave
12 forbid a—a hurricane hits that region the following
13 month.

14 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER STRIPLING: Yep.

15 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: You're telling me
16 that nothing from that PECO information can be used
17 to help people post that hurricane?

18 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER STRIPLING: So
19 what—what our—what we are—what we're doing with NYCHA
20 and others is getting information that we do have on
21 residents in the city for—for kind of general
22 priorities and targeting. So that information might
23 be able to be aggregated and used to say okay, we
24 think there are concentrations of folks with
25 disabilities in—in this building versus this other

2 building. But the thing is what we found after Sandy
3 and what other canvass--similar canvassing operations
4 found is it's often the--the person that isn't on the
5 registry, but it's--that's in the most danger.

6 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: [interposing] But--

7 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER STRIPLING: So we
8 would--we would never want to skip a door.

9 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: [interposing] But--
10 but just to kind of go into this, you know, I have
11 to--I want to call my colleague, but you're kind of
12 collecting this information, and are the people aware
13 of this that--that--that--why the information is being
14 held in some sort of secrete database?

15 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER STRIPLING: What
16 I'm--what I'm saying is we wouldn't use it as a
17 permanent database.

18 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: But you're saying
19 it's going into some database?

20 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER STRIPLING:
21 That's--that's right. It's going into a secure
22 database for--to--so we can track the referrals on it
23 in an emergency.

24 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Is the person aware
25 of that?

2 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER STRIPLING: Um,
3 yeah, well, there's a survey, and they're told at the
4 beginning of the survey we're collecting this
5 information electronically in order to provide you
6 services in an emergency.

7 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And is that survey
8 in different languages or it's only in English?

9 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER STRIPLING: Um, it
10 is different languages. It's been translated into I
11 think about half of the languages AWS is in. The
12 rest will be there soon.

13 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Do you have a copy
14 of that survey? Because I—we would like to see it.

15 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER STRIPLING: Sure.
16 It—it is under revision right now in advance of this
17 summer season. So the question is we—we would
18 recommend looking at it later in the year before
19 crystal storm season but—but we certainly do have
20 copies of it.

21 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And—and at minimum
22 have you even asked NYCHA and the city properties to
23 amend their emergency plans for their buildings? You
24 know, if you go back to why each city building has a
25 fire plan, that is because of crisis in the past. We

2 had to modify our system. Have we asked city-city
3 properties to modify their emergency plans within-
4 within their buildings?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: We just
6 met with NYCHA actually, and we are in discussions
7 about how they're going to integrate into the New
8 York City plans. Yes.

9 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: But nothing as of
10 yet?

11 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER STRIPLING: Well,
12 we—we have a firm commitment on the canvassing aspect
13 that NYCHA now commits to rapidly canvassing in
14 coordination with PECO their—their residents after
15 emergencies.

16 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I—I have some more,
17 but I—I respect and want to turn to my colleague who
18 has been very patient. Council Member Margaret Chin.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you, Chair.
20 I think we all have the same questions. It's like-
21 and this is the first time that I'm hearing about
22 PECO. So when you say you go out and canvass right
23 after emergency, what's the time frame? 24 hours or-
24 or more?

2 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER STRIPLING: The—the
3 mobilization guidelines for MSY (sic) and so I think
4 in an earlier question the councilman had. So the—
5 the way PECO is written, if it looks like there is a—
6 a disaster that's going to impact 5,000 or more
7 households—a big impact, and they're going to be
8 without central services. So power or heat or water
9 for—for 48 hours or more. That's when the—the PECO
10 sort of mobilization starts.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: But what—what's
12 the—the timeframe that they do. Like—like for
13 example if it was another Sandy, you're going to be
14 out there starting right after the storm stop?

15 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER STRIPLING: We're—
16 we're not. I mean I got—our mobilization—so after
17 Sandy it took the—the—the canvassing operations the
18 city do eventually started I think nine or ten days
19 after the storm.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: [interposing] I
21 think that was the problem.

22 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER STRIPLING: And—and
23 right now, we've got it down to—to 48 hours. So
24 we're expecting to be out knocking on doors about—
25 about 48 hours post-storm, and there are two main

2 reasons for that. One is that there are critical
3 life safety operations that need to be completed by
4 the Fire Department and others in the initial hours,
5 and—and canvassing has to go sort of after those
6 operations, and the others essentially just the—the
7 logistics in a massive incident. If we're talking
8 about whether you're 45 or 50,000 people, it's—there
9 is just a lot of logistics to get those people in
10 place assuming no transportation systems or—or
11 electronic communications.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: I mean the—the—the
13 problem that—I mean what we've learned from Sandy is
14 that a lot of people do not evacuate because what
15 happened during Hurricane Irene for the NYCHA
16 development in my district that was being affected we
17 knocked on doors and we got like 90% of us and
18 actually relocated to their families and all of this.
19 But then when Super Storm Sandy came, a lot of people
20 didn't. They said, well, you know, the last time we
21 didn't really have to leave. This time we're not
22 leaving, and that's when the problems started, but
23 like we didn't have information of where the
24 vulnerable population is, you know, where are the
25 seniors. Where are the people with disability? It

2 took a lot of wasted time, right? So in terms of
3 NYCHA, I think they now have sort of put together
4 some kind of list where they know, you know, where
5 the seniors are where the people who need help and
6 that—that helps because who's going to be out there
7 are really the volunteers. The residents they're
8 helping each other, and some of them they know their
9 neighbors, and they—they can offer the help. With
10 some buildings they don't know. So in terms of the—
11 the registry, it's like even for NYCHA, Mitchell-Lama
12 or the private buildings, it really important for
13 everyone to kind of know who your neighbor that might
14 need help because often time it's your neighbor who's
15 going to be there with some volunteer to sort of get
16 the emergency rescue going before the Fire Department
17 or alerting the Fire Department or alerting, you
18 know, alerting the NYPD. So somehow—I mean that's
19 where we're coming from. We want something to really
20 be helpful. So that people who are in the
21 neighborhood in the building volunteers, elected
22 officials at least we could start doing something to
23 help people who are in need. So that's the purpose
24 that we're pushing for this voluntary registry. We—

2 we should be encouraging private building and public
3 building to really have that information available.

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: I-I hear
5 you, Councilwoman Chin. As I previously had
6 mentioned through our Ready New York Campaign we're
7 focusing on people with disabilities and, in fact, we
8 just developed a community-based planning toolkit
9 where we can include the vulnerable populations in
10 all of these emergency preparedness plans and
11 efforts. We don't want it today to look what it
12 looked during Sandy.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: [interposing] No we
14 don't.

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: We want it
16 to look much better. We are pushing information out.
17 We are heavily engaged in all of our city agencies,
18 organizations, our projects, our volunteer
19 organizations, and I think we're in a much better
20 place today with the approach that we were taking in
21 simply to rely on once again a snapshot in the past
22 in time. I-we don't like the list for all the
23 reasons that we have identified. I think as we look
24 forward, I think everything that we put in place, the
25 technological advances that we're making, the

2 databases that we're calling, I think we'll be in a
3 much a better place today looking forward to
4 tomorrow.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Yeah, we don't
6 want-look, I don't think any one of us wants-wants
7 what happened back then.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: Right.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: I mean it was
10 because of a lot of the agencies that serve seniors.
11 They were the ones that's doing the home delivered
12 meals. Everybody went into action.

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: Uh-huh.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: I think that's
15 really important, and looking at one of the questions
16 that was-the chair asked earlier in terms of the
17 shelter, I mean the shelter that I have in my
18 district the evacuation center was the Seward Park
19 High School Complex. It wasn't accessible, and the
20 facility was horrible, right, even though electricity
21 went out, and they had to rely on generator and
22 senior had to be relocated. It-it was just a
23 nightmare, and it looks like all of the Lower
24 Manhattan in my district that was the emergency
25 shelter, and that should not be. So I think that's

2 something that we—going forward we will need to look
3 at, you know, where else can we—what other space can
4 we utilize that's a little bit better than what we
5 have in these high schools where the bathrooms are
6 not accessible, where the entrance are not
7 accessible. I mean we had to literally help push a
8 senior up in a wheelchair by putting a—a piece of
9 board there. I mean that was after Hurricane Irene.
10 We had the same situation. So we really need to kind
11 of focus on the evacuation center, and the emergency
12 shelter, all the preparedness that we're doing now.
13 We need to work on that.

14 ELI FRESQUEZ: Can I talk to this. Eli
15 Fresaeuz from the Mayor's Office for People with
16 Disabilities. Just to speak on that point real
17 quickly about Seward Park. You know there are a
18 number of evacuation centers that we have looked at
19 the entire map. We've done the map, and we've said
20 okay, we know there are issues here and here, and so
21 we've switched out a number of evacuation centers for
22 more accessible evacuation centers as we do this
23 survey process of looking at all the barriers. So
24 it's a—it's an evolving process, and so for example
25 that location has been switched out with a—a more—a

2 newer school that is much more accessible. But just
3 getting back also to the—the part about the list.
4 We've reached out to some members of the disability
5 community, and our sense is and what they've told us
6 is that they don't want to be on a list. There's a
7 lot of reasons why. There's the stigma attached to
8 being on a list. Many people may be undocumented
9 that have a relationship with government that
10 they're—they're afraid of being on a list especially
11 with all the things happening. There could be people
12 who are—who are domestic violence who don't want to
13 be on a list for fears, you know, obvious fears and—
14 and so you take these all in totality, and—and you
15 see that what emergency management and city partners
16 are doing is really inclusive emergency management.
17 They're trying to reach out in the community, and do
18 individualized preparation plans for people. A list
19 is—is so generic, and it has so many potentials for
20 being—for—for not having the correct information
21 that, you know, as everyone, as our partners have
22 mentioned, its—its utility is really limited.
23 Instead, we would rather focus on community
24 engagement, individualized preparedness, community
25 preparedness, and—and so, you know, again our—our

2 engagement with the community has shown they really-
3 they don't—they don't see the effectiveness of these
4 bills.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Well, I—I don't
6 want to continue to debate, but I think that as
7 council members we want to work with you to do the
8 best for our district, and that's why we need to hear
9 more about what you're doing. I mean I—I don't want
10 to just get boxes of ready New York, you know,
11 pamphlets and for us to distribute. It's got to be
12 more than that, right. So all the programs that you
13 are talking about, you know, in your testimony how do
14 you engage us in our office so that we can also work
15 together with the non-profits, with the organization
16 in our community, and to really have a partnership
17 effort, and just, you know, wait until a hearing, and
18 then we hear about all your ideas and it's because we
19 have a legislation and that's what we're getting, the
20 information. There's got to be a better way of
21 working together.

22 ELI FRESQUEZ: We would love to show at
23 your community board or a council district meetings,
24 and do a presentation a show and tell, and engage
25

2 you, engage your community. We would be happy to do
3 that.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Yeah, but, you now,
5 I think it's more just that. It's like we need to be
6 included in your planning process. You know, the-the
7 thinking is that you're doing I mean even just your
8 highlight task force. I have a little high-rise in
9 my office—in my district. This is the first time
10 I've heard about that. So communication, you know,
11 information has got to flow both ways. We want to be
12 helpful. So let's do that. Let's work together, and
13 give us the information, and so that we can really
14 work together with you. Thank you. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Sure. Thank you,
16 Council Member, and just to point out that those
17 folks that probably need the meeting the most,
18 probably can't make the meeting for a variety of
19 reasons, and just to speak to the—your—your comments
20 about why people are concerned to be on a list, it's
21 voluntary. No one is forcing people to be on a list,
22 and Kideson (sp?) has the program, voluntary that if
23 somebody has equipment in their home that is designed
24 to help maintain and sustain life, they inform them
25 of that. In the event of an outage, they could

2 expedite the recovery of that power. That's not done
3 to create a stigma. That's not done for the person
4 to say well I have a certain condition and—but I'm
5 embarrassed to—to say. No, you should it. In fact,
6 you don't have to. You should because we want you to
7 be a live in the event of an outage. This is not
8 about stigmatizing people. It's about empowering
9 them for them to make that choice, for them to make
10 that decision if they choose, to say I want to be
11 found and helped and assisted in the event of an
12 emergency. Because what I went through and saw in my
13 district, what my colleagues went through was
14 unacceptable. It was unacceptable. In my district
15 thank God for 15, 16-year-old kids. They're able to
16 go to multiple buildings 20 flights of stairs, a
17 shift. It wasn't FEMA. It wasn't the Red Cross. It
18 was volunteers on the ground that were—that was doing
19 this work, and I—I just—there's got to be a better
20 way. My colleague Council Member Menchaca has
21 questions.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Thank you,
23 Chair. Let me—let me actually just start with that
24 last point that Chair Treyger pointed to this concept
25 of stigma. I think—I think the intention is—is what

2 he's saying is right on. It's about saving lives.
3 But we're going to hear from advocates, and we're not
4 just today at the hearing, but let's engage the
5 undocumented community those who cannot speak
6 English—English language learners, the disability
7 community all these communities that—that you're
8 saying are—are telling you this. We want to hear it,
9 and we want to have a conversation about it. We
10 shouldn't push that aside, but we want to make sure
11 that we address those concerns, which is what my-my
12 next question which is about immigration status.
13 You—you mentioned immigration status as an issue. Do
14 you capture immigration status on your—any of your
15 forms?

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: No.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Okay, that's
18 good. So that's important, and I'm sure you probably
19 told them that that you don't—you don't capture data,
20 but this is a bigger conversation that we're going to
21 be having in the city about documents and—and
22 databases, and so I want to make sure that we all
23 have that conversation together because your—your—
24 your analysis right now is—is that the databases
25 don't work. So let's just drill down on that. I

2 think your—the testimony presented today pointed to,
3 and you said it over and over again, but I just want
4 to say it again that these registries are as only
5 useful as the quality and the timeliness of your
6 information, and they essentially are a waste of time
7 for first responders because information is—goes
8 stale almost immediately, and the only response we're
9 getting here is that you're saying well we want to—we
10 want to create preparedness in families—direct—direct
11 preparedness in families. Yet, the only thing that
12 I—I see and what you've presented is that you want to
13 come to community board meetings and you want to come
14 to Council meetings. You want to have these larger
15 conversations, but—but what both approaches are
16 missing are—are continued culture change, which means
17 that that's a—that's a really intensive people thing,
18 which means that people need to be on a weekly basis
19 attended to. Checked in to make sure their backpack
20 has everything that they need. The—the \$1,500, \$200
21 that they stashed in that backpack because it's part
22 of their to-go thing probably was used because they
23 needed the emergency situation, and then next week
24 it's not in there, and it's not going to come back
25 unless someone comes back and says how's your

1 backpack doing? And so I think this is what we're
2 trying to do, and this—this—this voluntary is a step,
3 but I—I see it as whole other culture shift from the
4 agencies itself that really are going to require a
5 lot more people engagement at the neighbor level, and
6 Council Member Chin is absolutely right. It's the
7 neighbors that are going to activate first, and it's
8 the neighbors that are going to know, or at least
9 have the opportunity to know their neighbors, and
10 who—who just came in, who just moved in. In this
11 city people are moving constantly because of economic
12 forces one, and two just because that's just the
13 nature of the city, the transient city. People are
14 coming in and out, and what you're doing right now is
15 just not going to reach those people. Either they're
16 not going to be able to come into these meetings
17 because they don't know about it, don't have a
18 relationship with their—with their local leadership.
19 They just moved in, and so I—I—I really do feel like
20 this an opportunity to address that, and know that
21 the resources, the intense resources needed for—for
22 this culture shift is going to be more than you are
23 already doing today. And this voluntary list might
24 be an opportunity for local organizations, and local—
25

2 local infrastructure, people, neighbors to be able to
3 engage and--and interact. So that's my next question.
4 The--the bill itself asks for a voluntary database.
5 How do you see if we move forward, right against your
6 wishes, and we hear it, but if we move forward with
7 this bill and--and force a--a mandatory, voluntary
8 list because we're going to be mandating it by law,
9 to create a voluntary list, how--how do you see that.
10 Let's go there. How do you see that engaging with
11 communities like ours at the district level, at the
12 community board levels at the CERT levels? How--how
13 do you see that functioning?

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: Okay, let
15 me address a couple of the issues that were brought
16 to the attention here. OSE customers it's not a very
17 big list relatively speaking when you're looking at
18 the MOPD suggestion that we have over one million
19 people on this government owned list. We're talking
20 apples and oranges here. Okay, upkeep, maintenance,
21 accuracy, and once again, I get back to the city of
22 Chicago where we have 27 million people, and maybe
23 300 people-- [background comments] Oh, 2.7 million
24 people. Alright, 2.7 million people. I'm corrected

2 here, and maybe 300 people on a registry, a voluntary
3 registry, and--

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: [interposing]

5 But what does that take, sir, if I can ask you? What
6 does that mean to you? What--what are you
7 extrapolating?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: Alright,
9 I'm--I'm--I'm looking at operationalize--
10 operationalizing this list with first responders.
11 Okay. So based on my strategic view of my
12 professional experience from a city planning
13 perspective, right now right at this time the multi-
14 faceted approach that I had mentioned to you and--I--I
15 respectfully disagree with our current community
16 planning toolkit to involve the vulnerable
17 populations. I think that it is an initial step to
18 providing for this culture change that you're
19 speaking about. So, you know, I--I think it's a first
20 step, and I think we've been doing a pretty good job
21 in the last several years in addressing that. Now,
22 as far as voluntary lists go, okay, we discussed this
23 internally. We discussed it on the High-Rise
24 Recommendation Committee. We're looking at it
25 perhaps in the Implementation Committee as well, a

1 voluntary list. The City can't maintain such a list
2 of over a million people. Do you want to do it on an
3 individual building basis, you know, where a
4 voluntary list by building management is required to
5 upkeep the vulnerable pops within their building who
6 may need assistance in times of emergencies and
7 disaster. Maybe. That's something to consider, but
8 certainly not for the Fire Department, not for the
9 Police Department, not for New York City Emergency
10 Management. This is unwieldy. That is beyond our
11 capability.
12

13 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: I-I-I--actually
14 I agree with you. I-I don't think it should be these
15 massive agencies. That's not the relationship we're--
16 we're pointing to. The point what we're trying to
17 make--the point that we're trying to make is that the
18 local organizations, the local neighbors need to be
19 given support to be able to create that--that--that
20 infrastructure.

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: And we're
22 pro--but we're providing those resources right now in
23 terms of information.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Okay, so--
25

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO:

3 [interposing] And--and workbooks, and toolkits, and--

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: [interposing]

5 Okay, well, let's--

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: --and I'll
7 hand them out.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: --let's just.

9 So we could--we could get to the--let's get to the--to
10 the fact here. So you're saying first step was--were
11 these toolkits and these presentations at these
12 community events. So if it's in there--it is the
13 initial step. What's the second step, what's the
14 third and what's the fourth and what's the fifth, but
15 what's the whole plan, and so I--I--because I agree
16 with you. I will give that to you that you have--
17 you're have in a lot of ways given these workbooks
18 and information to people but where--where's the
19 follow through, and if we're going to work and think
20 about ourselves as community organizers, in those
21 moment that we all felt and found ourselves in, it
22 takes more than--than that. And we're just trying to
23 sense--get a sense of where--where that is.

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FARRELL: Hi. I'm

25 Christian Farrell Deputy Commission for External

2 Affairs. I think I know all of you, and I oversee
3 Community Outreach for—and Emergency Preparedness
4 Education for Emergency Management. So there are—as
5 Jim said there are many different things we do. I
6 think one thing that you all know about because there
7 are strong—strong teams in all your districts is the
8 CERT program, Community Emergency Response Teams, and
9 I know Eric Curvay (sp?) and the Chinatown team have
10 been out working with you, working with us, you know,
11 to—to speak in languages to constituents and
12 neighbors and do all that. We're constantly
13 training. We're about to graduate a new class across
14 the boroughs, and then start another one. You know,
15 we need everyone CERT teams. The CERT teams look and
16 live with and, you know, represent their communities.
17 They're incredibly diverse and they're very
18 important. There's 2,000 people on CERT. There's 200
19 people in our office. So obviously they're a huge
20 force multiplier for us, and they bring us a lot of
21 situational awareness. They tell us what's going on.
22 We're in constant contact with them, and we want that
23 to be much larger. Ready New York we go out a
24 thousand times a year we—with volunteers with staff
25 with paid consultants to go to different groups. We

1 go weekend, evening, during the day in languages to
2 talk specifically about what groups are interested in
3 it. If it's seniors, if it's schools, if it's houses
4 of worship, you know, and we'll come back and back
5 and—and talk about different things. Citizen Corps
6 works. When you came to our office a few months ago
7 and that was the commissioner, and you brought some
8 of the community advocates that you've been working
9 with on—on—on the Red Hook Initiatives. You know, we
10 followed up with them to—to get that information. It
11 has to be government, and it has to be the community
12 working together just like we work with all of our
13 partners here and in the Mayor's Office and
14 everything. We're also committed to—we have 5,000
15 organizations in the Citizen Corps. We want that to
16 be 50,000 organizations. So we need that information
17 to come in from everywhere, and we will come out as
18 often as people want us to come out. You know, we
19 ask people to be in a group, but I've been at
20 presentations where there's three people, and we've
21 sat there for an hour and a half. We've worked
22 through. We've given them plans. We talk about
23 resources. So if people don't have the money that it
24 takes to pub a Go Bag together, we can help them find
25

2 that Go Bag. It's a--it's tall order to prepare eight
3 million people, people that are moving, people that
4 are coming from different communities that have
5 different views on how to be prepared or--or what
6 their priorities are, but we are committed. We know
7 that the Council's committed, and we'll continue to
8 work to make it the best we make it.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: I agree. I
10 mean I--I think you're laying a vision here, and--and I
11 think we agree with the vision, and I think we--we are
12 aligned on--on all this stuff. Look, I think the
13 questions we're trying to get to is--is how do we
14 implement that--that vision?

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FARRELL: This--this
16 is being implemented. This is more than a vision.
17 Ready New York stated in 2003. We change this every
18 year. We work with the Ad Council and FEMA. We put
19 in about \$300,000 a year and get about \$10 million in
20 free advertising. That's way larger than our budget.
21 What we would be able to do. That's in multiple
22 languages. We do advertising on social media. On
23 the side of trucks we--any idea we will come and this
24 has been implemented. You know, things change.
25 After 2003, everybody wanted to focus on terrorism.

2 After Katrina, people wanted to look at coastal
3 storm. There are other things come up, but this is
4 being implemented, but it's—it's changing, and like
5 you said, you don't pack Go Bag once. You don't
6 watch one video or go to one presentation, and then
7 you're prepared for life. It's like any activity
8 where you're trying to prevent something. You have
9 to keep it going. We feel like going to the schools.
10 We go to schools across the city parochial
11 independent public schools. We go to pre-K, to high
12 school. We have ready girl our superhero to try to
13 make it fun, and do it that way. We will go out.
14 We—any idea we will take, and we will implement it,
15 and—and work with you as—as things change. When we
16 started there was no social media. Now we have a big
17 social media campaign, but we also know that it's
18 very important. A lot of people don't use social
19 media or aren't comfortable with it. So we still do
20 a lot of paper brochures. We do a lot of one-on-one.
21 We have an incident distribution program. So if
22 there is a significant fire, we work with the Fire
23 Department. If there is a power outage or other
24 things, we will do direct mail to a—a few blocks
25 around there saying this happened in your district.

2 This is how you can be better prepared. Any ideas
3 that you can share, any ways. We look constantly in
4 what other cities are doing. As Jim mentioned, we're
5 doing ASL, American Sign Language videos. We got
6 that idea from San Diego because we originally called
7 them to ask them about—we figured that they had a lot
8 of Spanish language outreach, and we wanted to see
9 how they were doing it, and as part of that
10 conversation, the side thing was the ASL videos, and
11 how people may feel more comfortable getting their
12 notify information that way. So we now have a 115
13 videos that we put on You Tube that we send out. So
14 we want to look at other ideas. We want to work with
15 you and—but this is way past the vision. This is
16 strong into the implementation and it will keep
17 going.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Okay. Thank
19 you for that. I—I didn't mean to call it just a
20 vision in the clouds and so I—I respectfully want to
21 restate what I'm going to say, which is you are
22 implementing the vision, and I'm seeing it on the
23 ground and—and all the things that you're doing are
24 great. They're still—they are still—they're—or I
25 should I say, there is still a gap here that we're

2 trying to identify right now that—that connects the
3 neighbor to neighbor situation where we can build
4 relationships right now, and it's not going to happen
5 on social media. It's not going to happen on
6 everything that you're doing. Everything that you're
7 doing right now is creating that culture framework.
8 Absolutely, people are—are getting bombarded by it,
9 and—but it's going to take more than that to change
10 culture for a person that had paced a Go Bag before.
11 I mean that's why we're trying to do with this list
12 is to at least identify people that want to be part
13 of this effort, and that's part of this—this piece of
14 legislation. Now, whether--and we're going to
15 continue to debate it, and that's great, but what my
16 final point is in Red Hook we have a lot of—and it's
17 a small—and I—and I think that while I was at the
18 office I kind of called it what we called during
19 Sandy it's a huggable community. It's big enough so
20 you can hug it. It's small enough so that everybody
21 kind of knows each other, and we're doing our best to
22 connect those—those—those people who want to help
23 their neighbors, their vulnerable neighbors. Their
24 neighbors that are going to need help, and we know
25 they're going to need help and—and right now, we're—

2 we're failing in being able to bring resources, and
3 this is about funding. This is a lot about funding.
4 This is also a lot about being able to identify the
5 people. There's a lot of legal issues right now
6 with-with information. So, we need your help to
7 figure that out, and bring those resources in so that
8 neighbors can help neighbors, and it's not going to
9 be just out of the will—the good will of their heart.
10 That's going to happen on-on-on crisis day. Good
11 hearts are going to come out. That's no—that's not
12 our job. Our jobs aren't to rely on the good hearts
13 of New Yorkers that are going to do the right thing.
14 It's to prepare as government, and we're—I'm—I'm
15 still feeling there's a gap here that we haven't—we
16 haven't addressed, and so I'll stop here, but let's
17 continue the conversations. Let's come—let's go back
18 into the rooms, and discuss those, but this gap is
19 still here, and it's not being addressed. Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yes, thank you very
21 much, Council Member Menchaca, and just to kind of
22 just make the point about, you know, the security of
23 lists and the privacy of that information, I was a
24 fan and still am a fan of the City ID Card, but I
25 abstained from the vote because I knew that there

2 were concerns about how that was going to be
3 maintained in the event of a future president that
4 would jeopardize that list, and I—I'm not looking to
5 say I told you so, but in this situation, there is no
6 information on this survey or should there be that
7 pertains to a person's immigration status. This is
8 simply about do—would you need help in the event of
9 an emergency. Is there a disability that you're
10 facing that prevents you from evacuating on your own.
11 There's no other type of information that would, but
12 language, of course, can be an issues, access. And
13 with regards to Con Edison's list, even if the list is
14 not monumental, at least we have some knowledge of
15 where these people are, and if—if they need help, and
16 again it's—it's voluntary. And even in the event—
17 and—and they mentioned with Chicago where—can you
18 imagine how much time we could have saved when we
19 sent people up including myself, up many staircases.
20 Had I known which apartments needed—needed the actual
21 help. We—we spent time knocking on every single
22 door. Some folks were there. Some were not. Some
23 needed help. Some did not, but those that didn't
24 need help just wanted to engage in a conversation
25 anyway. We could have saved time and sent resources

2 and manpower elsewhere. So-so what-what I'm saying
3 is that right now we're just kind of-and-and to the
4 point about the outreach, I-I want to credit
5 Christina Farrell, the Deputy Commissioner and-and
6 Commissioner Esposito, and his team because they have
7 done good outreach. They have gone to many meetings.
8 When I email them on an issue, they respond
9 immediately. The point that we're trying to make is
10 that the people that we need to help and serve in
11 this situation are not coming to those meetings.
12 When we have those meetings, the turnout is not-is
13 not always great because it's those people who want
14 to help that come out, the CERT volunteers, the
15 friends they bring, and we love them. We commend
16 them. Eric Rivera is wonderful, but the people who
17 actually need that help are not coming to those
18 meetings, and then it becomes like where-where we
19 have to turnkey that out, and try to find them and
20 reach out. And so, we're just looking for a more
21 responsible organized way of just knowing where the
22 most vulnerable are, and again it's their choice if
23 they want to inform us of that. But we just have to
24 do more than the status quo.

2 You mentioned about the—the homebound
3 evacuation program where—where someone calls 311 a
4 vehicle can come and assist them. How is that being
5 advertised? Because I was not even aware of this.

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: So, a
7 couple things. We'll back up to the Con Ed life
8 sustaining equipment.

9 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yes.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: Again,
11 that is a—an example of a voluntary list that a
12 failure. It—it relies on people notifying Con Edison
13 of the type of equipment that they have. Not
14 specifically that it requires electricity--

15 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: [interposing]
16 Right.

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: --and
18 their current address. There is no mechanism to
19 update that list from time to time other than the
20 person who made the initial call, and we have found
21 over many years that that is not a good way to do
22 business. That list is maintained by Con Ed. It's
23 shared with the city. Primarily, the Police
24 Department operationalizes it, and will go to a
25 location to say after a power failure, Hi, is

2 everything okay. That's the way it's currently done.

3 Probably in—in less than the last year we have

4 working with US Health and Human Services gained

5 access to the empower database. It is a database of

6 Medicare, Medicaid funding medical equipment, updated

7 about monthly I believe it is, and it's updated based

8 on what the government has paid for durable medical

9 goods or—or other type of medical equipment. If I as

10 the Fire Department again during a major power

11 failure. We wouldn't do it for a little blip, but if

12 we were again to have a—a major power failure, I have

13 the ability to query a Health and Human Services for

14 things like electrically power life sustaining

15 equipment that they have funded based on zip codes,

16 and they will then give back to us a list of places

17 that I now can actively go. Now that I know that I

18 have current information, I can make—knock on the

19 door, make sure that that, Listen, are you okay? Do

20 you have a battery backup? When are you going to

21 need assistance? Do you have an acute medical

22 emergency now that we need to take you to a hospital

23 for? So this is something that we just recently have

24 that we are in the process of working with Emergency

25 Management to see how we can exercise it, how we can

2 operationalize it in a way that—that makes sense and
3 becomes more efficient, and as time goes on, I think
4 it's going to be a big tool for us. And that's
5 something that we can proactively do rather than
6 waiting for somebody to pick up a phone and call 911
7 and now that they're—they're a—a much more emerging
8 condition than if we had gotten to them earlier. So
9 we're pretty hopeful that that's going to work out
10 for us on a number of ways. A homebound evacuation
11 is—is really targeted to someone who for whatever
12 their disability is has no other way to evacuate from
13 a—from a mandatory evacuation. So what needs to be
14 said is just because somebody is vulnerable or
15 disabled doesn't mean that they're not able to care
16 for themselves, or that they're not able to make a
17 plan for their own emergency, that they're not able
18 to provide for their own needs. We're here to pick
19 up those people that can't. So if I have no ability
20 to evacuate on my own, no friends, no neighbors, no
21 caregivers, no family, no contracted medical
22 provider, no access to Access-A-Ride, nothing that
23 the only way that I can leave the evacuation area is—
24 is if somebody from the City of New York comes and—
25 and takes care of me. They have—they call 311.

2 There is a—I know 311 doesn't like to call it a
3 script, but there's a list of questions, a script
4 that they go through to identify their transportation
5 assistance level. Meaning that can I ambulate to the
6 curb? Can I sit unassisted or am I bedridden? And
7 that will determine the type of transportation that
8 they receive. They'll—they'll be able to take their
9 service animals. They'll be able to take their
10 medical equipment. If they do have a caregiver with
11 them, they'll accompany them. People that can
12 ambulate to the curb will be transferred, too, and
13 their information will be shared with Paratransit,
14 and arrangements made for Paratransit to come pick
15 them up and take them to an evacuation center. If
16 they can't ambulate to the curb, but they can sit
17 unassisted is where the Fire Department comes in
18 where we have haired a—a team for firefighters to
19 operated with an Emergency Management providers
20 usually a DOE accessible vehicle and a driver. We
21 group them several per borough and stage them to
22 where we need them, receive the information from 311,
23 and again, remember this is days or hours prior to
24 the actual emergency happening. So if my building
25 has power, normally I have power. If my building has

2 an operational elevator it's still working. The
3 emergency hasn't happened yet. So we will go. We
4 will pick them up. We will assist them. We'll carry
5 them down the stairs. We'll assist them into a-into
6 the elevator, transport to the evacuation center.
7 For those people who are bedridden, our only option
8 at this point, and this is a piece of the plan that
9 is a little lacking, but we're working on making it
10 better is if we have to send them an ambulance. It's
11 the only vehicle we have with someone who is bed
12 ridden can be transferred via a stretcher into an
13 ambulance and then we'll take them to a hospital
14 that's outside the evacuation zone.

15 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Well, let me just
16 ask you a few things there. So what do you do if
17 someone is on the 20th floor and no elevators and no
18 light in-in the staircases and hallways. Then-then
19 what happens.

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: Okay,
21 again homebound had to do pre-emergency. So if
22 they're on the 20th floor with no lights and no
23 elevator, there is something wrong with the building
24 that they're in that condition. The-the emergency
25 hasn't happened yet. The power is still on, but if

2 we were to encounter that, my team of firefighters
3 will go up those 20 stairs, and they will bring them
4 downstairs to the curb and put them into the vehicle
5 and drive them to the evacuation site.

6 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And that's not-not
7 easy, sir, and I'm sure you know that.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: Yeah.

9 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: That is--that's a
10 very intense case, but--so you mentioned before that
11 the FDNY tapped into a federal database. Is that
12 correct?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: Correct,
14 Health and Human Services maintains the database of
15 payments for medical equipment that the federal
16 government has paid for.

17 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And there were no
18 HIPAA concerns with regards to people---

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: There are
20 HIPAA concerns. It's not open the public because the
21 Fire Department is a healthcare agency, and our
22 computer systems at HIPAA-compliant. We're able to--
23 to receive that information.

2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right, but those
3 individuals are not aware that FDNY has tapped into
4 that?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: That's
6 correct. They have shared their information with the
7 federal government, whatever releases, whatever
8 privacy policies there are between them and Medicare
9 and Medicaid, Health and Human Services will remain
10 as part of that.

11 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: But the driving
12 intents of this database inquiry is to try to save
13 lives.

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: Correct,
15 and again it's not information that the Fire
16 Department or the City maintains. It's information
17 that at the time of need we request from HHS.

18 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: But the point is
19 that that's the point I'm trying to make. The
20 government, which in this case the federal government
21 has a certain list that's helpful to you in the event
22 of an emergency. If you didn't have that list, then
23 what?

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: If we
25 didn't have that list, we'd be where we are right now

2 with—we're talking about electrically powered life
3 sustaining equipment. That's the—the list that Con
4 Ed maintains that is not accurate. The—what we have
5 now is when people have an emergency they will call
6 us and indicated that they have an emergency. The
7 problem or the difference between the—the list that
8 you're proposing and the one that—that is maintained
9 by Health and Human Services is accuracy. It is
10 targeted that—and it is something that we are
11 requesting for a particular need depending on what
12 that need is. The problem with the—the list as
13 proposed is—is that it's voluntary whereas the
14 information from Health and Human Services may not
15 capture somebody who private pays for durable medical
16 equipment. But it's the tool that we have available
17 to us. The—the problem with the list that is propose
18 is—is that it's voluntary. It—it takes somebody to
19 say tat I have a vulnerability, and I want to share
20 that with somebody. Another problem that we see with
21 the list is that it—it creates and unrealistic or
22 possibly unrealistic expectation on the person that
23 volunteers their name that some exceptional service
24 is going to come to them. We are fearful that
25 somebody who puts their name on a list will be a

2 little less prepared to take care of themselves in an
3 emergency and more reliant on their name on a list
4 for somebody to come and rescue them. It does not
5 allow for us to vector to people who need the—who
6 have the most need because it was again a snapshot in
7 time, the—the vulnerability that put them on the list
8 to begin with might not be one that makes them
9 vulnerable in a current emergency. It also discounts
10 everyone that either chose not to be put on a list,
11 or has a condition that they—they didn't consider
12 vulnerable at the time or what not. Perhaps it was
13 somebody that has a temporary vulnerability because
14 they became injured, and now I have a leg injury, an
15 ankle injury and I don't ambulate as well as I once
16 did. I live in a high-rise and my elevator is pretty
17 reliable. I'm not vulnerable until my power goes
18 out, and my elevator doesn't work any more and I
19 don't have heat and I don't have running water. I'm
20 suddenly vulnerable. I'm not captured on that list.
21 If I as an emergency responder have a list during an
22 evacuation, I'm not physically at a building during
23 an evacuation unless during homebound somebody
24 specifically made a request. It's not within the
25 Fire Department's responsibility to go door to door

2 to tell people everybody out of the building there's
3 a storm coming. Now, we do have and the Police
4 Department is not here. I don't want to speak for
5 them, but there is a program where the Police
6 Department is now charged with pre-emergency making a
7 face-to-face notification to people that hi, you
8 know, there's a storm coming or whatever the
9 emergency is, and you—and it's either you need to
10 evacuate or you may need to evacuate soon. That in
11 and of itself may be more useful in identifying
12 somebody that says oh thank you very much officer.
13 I'd like to get out, but I can't because of this
14 reason, and now that person has become known to us—us
15 meaning the city and we can make arrangements to
16 help them out. During the homebound evacuation,
17 those people that had no other way to evacuate are
18 now assisted by us. During—during the emergency we
19 don't do evacuations. We will do rescues, but
20 typically, those rescues don't happen in high-rises.
21 Those rescues happen in low-lying areas, private
22 homes, people who became isolated because of storm
23 surge or because their structure wasn't strong enough
24 to survive the storm, and now they have—they're in—in
25 danger and we have to go rescue them. And then post-

2 storm, we have the ability now to either PECO or
3 programs like PECO particularly community-based
4 programs need is identified based on what's actually
5 happening now, not what happened on a list that was
6 created a year ago, and maybe it was maintained and
7 maybe it wasn't. Maybe the list was—was accessible
8 to somebody. Another problem we're having a list is
9 from an emergency responder is that I can either risk
10 sending resources to a place where it's not needed
11 because either that person no longer lives there,
12 wasn't home at the time of the emergency, or they
13 don't need my assistance, and now I'm not sending
14 resources to where it's actually needed where
15 somebody didn't ahead of time, you know, identify
16 themselves as—as going to be needing this special
17 assistance. So I mean those—those as we have talked
18 and, you know, we've been at this for a number of
19 years, the—the idea of a list whether it's a
20 mandatory, voluntary list or a voluntary, voluntary
21 list, we just don't see it as nearly as useful as
22 people identifying themselves at the time of need or
23 us identifying them for them at the time or need.
24 We're now with this very new tool, this Empower
25 database that, you know, we have a lot of— Again,

1 we're going to exercise it. We're going to look at.
2 We have to see how it's going to help us. For years
3 information has been available, but HHS has not been
4 able to share it. So this is something very new.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And I—and I
7 appreciate very—I could tell you put a lot, you know,
8 a lot of thought into your—into this analysis and I
9 appreciate that, but at the time of need we learned
10 at prior hearings people could not reach emergency
11 help and services. I learned through this committee
12 hearing, and I think my first year that the fire in
13 Breezy during Sandy was not called in through a phone
14 call. It was—it was brought into your department's
15 attention through a device that your department
16 complains is also not reliable. It's called the Fire
17 Box, which sometimes people play pranks and they pull
18 it when there's no fire, and shame on them and that's
19 terrible. That's a waste of time and precious
20 resources, but that's how that fire was called in
21 because power was down. Phones were out. My cell
22 phone service I was—I was in Southern Brooklyn. I
23 was in—in Queens at the time. The phone was out.
24 You couldn't reach people. So I don't know how you
25 reach people during that time of need, and that was

2 our problem. We couldn't communicate with anybody
3 and we were just—we were just really just guessing in
4 the dark the entire time, but I think my colleague
5 has a follow-up question. I think Council Member
6 Menchaca.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Thank you,
8 Chair. I do want to follow up on this last stream of
9 FDNY con-conclusions specifically on the—the
10 challenges that you have with engaging people and
11 expectations. It's just kind of expectations.
12 There's a lot of managing of expectations with
13 people, and I guess what I—I want to share with you
14 about what's happening in Red Hook and the—the kind
15 of system we're trying to develop here. We talked
16 and I alerted or eluded to earlier that it needs a
17 lot of resources, and it's a lot of people-intensive
18 resources. It can't just be volunteers. We ought to
19 bring—we got to bring in non-profit structure. A lot
20 of the non-profits don't have emergency management in
21 their management in their mission, which has—which
22 has been very difficult for organizations that want
23 to do the right thing, but the laws are the laws.
24 They can't go outside, and so—so this is—this is part
25 of—and I know that the CERT team is out there, too,

2 but there's a lot of—there's a lot of challenges with
3 the CERT team, too, doing—doing this kind of work
4 because this work that we're talking about that we're
5 pointing to is—is kind of new work. It's neighbor to
6 neighbor conversations that need to happen on a daily
7 basis. So I guess the only thing I want to push back
8 on or—offer a new avenue of discussion is how—how
9 do we set those expectations with people that are
10 going to be on these lists, and potentially this list
11 that might passed the City Council and signed by the
12 Mayor. The idea and we've executed that in Red Hook
13 is here are the expectations, and they're not that
14 high. Keep them low, but we're going to be here in
15 conversation, and so I—I wonder is that—does that fit
16 in your model of conversation with—with people that,
17 you know, is consistent? Or you could say, look,
18 this—this is—this is where we are, and—and that—that—
19 at the—at the very basic nature of—of interaction
20 with whomever agency or neighbor that at the—the very
21 least there'll be one person in this neighborhood
22 that will know who you are. Then you have some need
23 whatsoever. So they can connect to the system, and
24 that you will be—you will be found if needed, and not
25 that you're going to have medical emergency and all

2 those things will-will come, the system will-will
3 present itself. But does that-does that give you an
4 avenue to change that-that expectation setting with-
5 with individuals?

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: Yes and
7 no. So if you're talking about a strictly community-
8 based, you know, either building or a development or
9 a neighborhood centric thing that doesn't involve
10 city resources, doesn't involve first responders that
11 is more a grassroots very local thing that like you
12 described neighbor helping neighbor would not to me
13 rise to the level of legislation requiring a list.
14 That's-that's something that people can do right now
15 if on an ad hoc basis they think that fits their
16 neighborhood, their building or their development.
17 And I think that once we-we start to make it more
18 official, I think that there needs to be some very
19 direct conversations with-with people about what the
20 list is, and what it's not. And again, to manage
21 those expectations because the worst thing in the
22 world would be for me to put my name on a list and
23 think that now I can sit back. My emergency
24 management needs my-my-everything is taken care of,
25 and that's, you know, that's not the reality.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: It's not
3 reality, but it's also an assumption, right?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: Right.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: So I—I think
6 we're got to—how do we move away from assumption and—
7 and educate? This is—this is part of the steps that—
8 that we've taken as a city that—that we've just laid
9 out a lot of education, a lot of awareness. And so,
10 if that assumption is correct, and—and I still feel
11 like it's an assumption, then we—that's on us. We
12 have to change that assumption about any list that's
13 out there right now, or a future one that's on it's
14 way be it grassroots or whatever, and—and I also want
15 to challenge the—the idea that—that if it's a
16 grassroots thing, it's not us. It's on them. It's
17 like that—that has to change, too. I think there has
18 to be resources from the city of New York to address
19 that grassroots need for infrastructure. And so I—I
20 just want to—I want to point that—point that out.

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: I think
22 that's where Emergency Management comes in with their
23 emergency planning, with their educational programs.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Right, and so
25 maybe--I don't know if that's what Elana wants to

2 kind of tell—I don't want to point you out on that,
3 but—but I think that—that is—that's alive and well
4 right now. It's like if it's—if it's a community
5 organization or effort that's grassroots, we're going
6 to step away from that. I think there needs to be a
7 real—a real dedicated link a resource to make sure
8 that—that—that—that grows, and grows effectively, and
9 that there's links to the bigger system that is
10 evolving over time. I mean that's—that's a—that's a
11 little point that I wanted to make, and the last
12 point I know the chair said something about IDNYC and
13 I just want to make sure Chair that—that—that because
14 this is on record and people hearing that no one
15 feels that any of the information that was captured
16 by IDNYC included in the immigration status. It kind
17 of felt like I was hearing that. So I want to make
18 sure that everybody out there is hearing IDNYC did
19 not capture immigration status at all, and that is a
20 protected class of information, and we're in the
21 middle of legal debate on. So thank you chair.

22 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: That is absolutely
23 correct, colleague. My only point was that which
24 bodies had access to the list in general, but yes,
25 that's a point well taken. Local Law 60, which was

2 passed in 2013 by the previous Council requires
3 Emergency Management to develop a plan for
4 identifying and conducting outreach to communicating
5 with and assisting vulnerable and homebound
6 individuals before, during and after coastal storms
7 and other severe weather and natural disaster events.
8 What is the status of Emergency Management plan for
9 outreach and recovery to vulnerable and homebound
10 individuals as required by Local Law 60.

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: Yes,
12 Councilman, as I previously mentioned, we have a lot
13 of partnerships inside government, outside
14 government, and as you correctly pointed out, Local
15 Law 60 and agency partners we targeted vulnerable and
16 homebound populations, and we are, you know,
17 developed processes, provide required information
18 before, during and after disasters. We identified
19 how it's to be done, and who has to do it.

20 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Have you—it says a
21 plan to identify. How do you identify those
22 individuals?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: Well,
24 we're working with our AWS organizations. As I
25 previously mentioned, we have over a thousand

2 organizations that deal directly with the vulnerable
3 folks who need assistance.

4 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So once you—once
5 you identify a person, what happens? Then what?

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: It's with
7 the providers. Every vulnerable person's needs are
8 different.

9 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: But you see, this
10 is where there's a disconnect. You identify these
11 individuals, but you're saying it's through the
12 organization, it's not through your agency and what
13 happens. What is the—what is—what is the—what is the
14 ultimate goal of identifying and—and communicating
15 with them. Because the laws says your agency has to
16 do this, not a not-for-profit or not—or not some
17 other organization. Your agency has to do this. So
18 I'm—I'm just curious. Do you have a list of these
19 individuals?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: Yes, well,
21 we—we reach—we have reach-out not only through our
22 agency, our AWS program. We work with other city
23 agencies such as HRA who deals with Adult Protective
24 Services, homecare, HIV-AIDS patients. We work with
25 DHS who has outreach to the street homeless. We work

1 with the Department for the Aging, for example, who
2 have case managing—management contractors who work
3 with Meals on Wheels. DOHMH as well as FDNY as you
4 previously heard have systems in place—place to reach
5 out and to identify folks. We have community groups
6 out there that we deal with, homecare associations,
7 dialysis centers. You know, we have that whole
8 network that we deal with. I mean it—it involves
9 thousands and thousands of organizations.

11 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, let me just
12 read the exact text from the bill. This is now law.
13 I'm sorry, law. The plan must include (a) a
14 mechanism for utilizing existing lists of homebound
15 and vulnerable pop—individuals while respecting any
16 applicable confidentiality requirements such as lists
17 maintained by community-based groups, service
18 providers and relevant city agencies including at a
19 minimum the Department for the Aging, Department of
20 Health and Mental Hygiene, HRA, and New York City
21 Housing Authority. B. A process whereby vulnerable
22 and homebound individuals can't receive information
23 on how to request being added to a list [laughs] to a
24 list or system used by Emergency Management.

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: That by
3 directionality would occur between client and case
4 manage and/or organization. We can't possibly deal
5 one-on-one with another one million people out there.

6 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yeah, but--but the
7 law says this has to be--

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO:
9 [interposing] Okay, obviously I mean you have
10 specific questions regarding that law. I don't know
11 how the Ts are crossed or the Is are dotted. I have
12 a broad overview of what that law says, and what we
13 have done to comply with that law.

14 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right.

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: So I'm not
16 the individual you need to speak to about that. I
17 could find that person, but I don't have the specific
18 information that you are requesting.

19 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yeah, I think we
20 need an update on the status of--

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO:
22 [interposing] Of Local Law 60.

23 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: --of compliance
24 with Local Law 60 because if I continue it's--there's
25 more stuff here that's really important to have. A

2 mechanism for making oral and written public
3 communications available in the most commonly spoken
4 languages of affected communities to the extent
5 practicable—prac—practical, a—maybe there's a lot of
6 information that would be very helpful to have with
7 regards to—to compliance, and—and just to—there's
8 also there's Local Law 58, which requires Emergency
9 Management to develop a plan to track persons who
10 enter or exit special medical needs shelters during
11 such events. So do you have a status update on—on
12 the compliance with Local Law 58?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: We have
14 mechanisms in place to tack—to track where MTA,
15 Paratransit takes individuals. So there is a
16 transportation piece in place to track those folks.
17 We have the evacuation centers set up that actually
18 register incoming people into our shelter system, and
19 we have a mechanism in place to track who was coming.

20 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Um--

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: Yes, I
22 prepared, you know, testimony for your discussion on—

23 -

24 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: [interposing]
25 Right.

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: --lists.

3 I did not come here to discussion Local Law 60 and/or
4 Local Law 58.

5 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: No, --I-I
6 understand. It's just that--

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO:
8 [interposing] Okay, thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: --it's just that--
10 it's just, but in your testimony today and the theme
11 that we're hearing from the Admin is that you don't
12 like lists.

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: I don't
14 like government owned single list of disabled and/or
15 vulnerable people because of the magnitude because of
16 the size of the list, because of the updating of
17 that list, because of the accuracy of the list--

18 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: [interposing] But
19 Local Law 60 requires you to--

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: --and
21 operationalizing all of those mechanisms.

22 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: But that's the--the
23 point we're trying to make is that Local Law 60 was
24 signed into law by I guess the previous mayor, but
25 it--it basically--again the language I'm--I'm reading

2 from—from-this is from the law. So this is—you guys
3 could access this, too, is that you have to list and
4 from all those sources whether it's an organization,
5 whether it's an agency to maintain and have an
6 existing list of people who need this—this type of
7 help.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: Yes, and
9 this communication, as I mentioned before, as I
10 understand it, goes from agency to an organization or
11 aging—agency to client. Okay, and we have a lot of
12 city agencies out there that are currently doing
13 that, and I previously mentioned.

14 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So I guess one of
15 the question we have is there someone I guess from
16 your agency that is coordinating the deliverables
17 required under the Settlement Agreement, and those
18 requirements under all those Local Laws 58, 60 and 62
19 as they have some overlap. For instance, the
20 Settlement Agreement requires a Post-Emergency
21 Canvassing operation, PECO much like the door-to-door
22 task force required under Local Law 60. How can we
23 show the city isn't duplicating efforts and—and
24 actually in this case actually doing them?

2 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER STRIPLING: Let
3 me—I can speak to that.

4 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Please.

5 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER STRIPLING: So on—
6 on the particular point of canvassing I think a
7 thumbnail of the history would—would help. When
8 Local Law 60 was passed in 2013, there was an effort
9 by the city, a large effort to compile a series of—of
10 playbooks that were submitted to City Council at the
11 end of 2013 in partial fulfillment of that law. So
12 that—that playbook process created--the—the PECO
13 program was—was actually created as a—a fulfillment
14 of that door-to-door outreach and the 5,000-household
15 threshold to 48-hour timeline for essential services
16 were part of that—of that planning effort. So—so in—
17 in the sense of canvassing, those are the same
18 efforts, and Local Law 60 was really the—the thing
19 that kicked it off. So—so canvassing was in place
20 before the—the settlement was finalized.

21 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: But I just wanted—
22 if—if you could, you know, just take notes on this
23 now and get back to us soon. Section B of Local Law
24 60 I'll read it one more time: A process whereby
25 vulnerable and homebound individuals can receive

2 information on how to request being added to a list
3 or system used by Emergency Management to receive
4 this type of assistance to get help. That is kind of
5 the crux of what we're trying to get at at this
6 hearing as well, is how can individuals request being
7 added to such a list, and—and is there a list? You
8 know, that's—that's the issue. Yes, please.

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FARRELL: So the—the
10 thing is list our system. The system is AWS, which
11 is what is what Jim has talked about a lot, and so
12 that is when we work with all the different
13 organizations city, non-profit providers, and they
14 have a system. They're reaching out. They're
15 delivering meals. They're checking on homebound.
16 They're bringing medication. They're doing whatever
17 their—their services are, and through our Human
18 Services Division and the age and all the different
19 groups we work through that. People may have
20 multiple service providers. They may be getting it
21 multiple times. It—it isn't a list per se. It's
22 working, sending out information it's going to snow
23 this weekend. Sending out information, you know,
24 about various different things. So the way that that
25 is in place is—is through AWS, which is a larger

2 system. You know, all the playbooks have been
3 provided to the Council and under the legislation we
4 give updates as things—plans and the playbooks are
5 updated, but we can certainly at another time, you
6 know, come and discuss that and—and talk through
7 where we are, where things are going. And certainly
8 since a lot of this came through coastal storm, I
9 mean there's a lot of other emergencies that we—the
10 city responds to and coordinates everyday but, you
11 know, in the off season for Hurricane season which is
12 right now, we're always looking to update these
13 things to see what we've learned, if technology has
14 increased, if the partners have changed.

15 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: But and I—I really
16 thank you Deputy Commissioner for that, but if I'm—if
17 I'm correct, you're relying on many organizations for
18 those types of events.

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: Yes.

20 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Those events.

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FARRELL: But we're
22 the coordinating agency.

23 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: [interposing] So--

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FARRELL: We rely on
25 the other organizations.

2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So just to kind of
3 go back to what you--what you said about the issue
4 with the list, they're only as good as they're up to
5 date. Organizations fold.

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FARRELL:
7 [interposing] That's why we take the--

8 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: [interposing]
9 Usually government agencies don't.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FARRELL: That's why
11 we--first, by and large, these are a lot of, you know,
12 Visiting Nurse, Catholic Charities, UJA
13 organizations. There are a lot of large
14 organizations, and they're meeting with their
15 clients, you know, several times a week there--so the--
16 the difference is they're--they're in, and if one
17 organization folds, those--I mean a lot of them come
18 through different contracts or they then move, you
19 know, to--to a different organization, but the client
20 is not lost. They--they still receive the meals.
21 They still receive the services.

22 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yes.

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FARRELL: And the
24 difference is they--it isn't like you--you sign up, and
25 then hopefully in a year you update it when you move.

2 People are receiving meals, services, visits, check-
3 ins on a daily, weekly, a very recent basis. So
4 their databases are—are much more up to date because
5 they're seeing their clients on a very regular basis.

6 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right but we're—
7 we're relaying on them.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: Yes.

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FARRELL: They're the
10 service providers. OEM is not a service provision
11 agency. We have 200 people that plan, that to
12 outreach, that response that's--

13 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: [interposing]
14 That's—see, well, that's a whole other thing. I—I am
15 big advocate for increasing personnel in your agency
16 because--

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FARRELL: We—in fact,
18 but we are never—that our charter is not the service
19 provision agency. Even if our staff doubled, we
20 would be working on the community-based model. We
21 would do—doing that through the Department--

22 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: [interposing] Just
23 to point out--

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FARRELL: --of Social
25 Services, Aging, all of the—the non-profits. Those

2 are the organizations that are set up to do direct
3 service provisions.

4 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right.

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FARRELL: Not our
6 agency.

7 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right, well, that's
8 because of the limitations of your agency because you
9 have a total of what, 400 or so people?

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FARRELL: Two
11 hundred.

12 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Two hundred people.

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FARRELL: Yeah.

14 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: When you—when—when—
15 when we're—when we're talking about over a million
16 people who are vulnerable in emergencies and it—it's—
17 it's very much inadequate, but that's a—I guess we
18 look to a—to a budget time discussion, but clearly
19 more work—more work has to happen there. I will
20 follow up with some more questions afterward—
21 afterwards in—in meetings I'd like to have with New
22 City Emergency Management, but I—appreciate fully
23 the—the deep thought and analysis that all of you
24 have put into this. I do want to say to my colleague
25 Margaret—Council—Council Member Margaret Chin the

2 answer to the Seward Park High School problem is for
3 the City to invest in that high school and build-

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: [off mic] It's my
5 high school

6 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: --build a-a ramp
7 and make it accessible. It's not to kind of go
8 around it. It's to make sure that our schools, our
9 public facilities are accessible for all, and so
10 there's a lot of follow up on-on that front as well.
11 We learned that we have not met the goal of 60
12 accessible shelters. I think we're only about a
13 third there. We learned that right now if you are
14 homebound individuals or someone who needs help, you
15 kind of have to figure out a way to-if you don't come
16 to a meeting or if you don't know about a meeting or
17 if you don't know about Go Bag, you're kind of on
18 your own. And if you're a non-profit or local group
19 in Red Hook, it kind of-I guess the onus is on you to
20 figure out who those people are, and how to help them
21 out.

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: Council
23 Member Treyger.

24 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So-so it's just I-
25 believe me, I have much appreciate and-and respect

2 for the meetings that are happening and for the
3 outreach and the brochures and the—and the rate.
4 It's really good stuff, but I am concerned that the
5 people who need this assistance and information the
6 most somehow we're not getting them. There's still a
7 disconnect, and we're trying to figure out a way to
8 close the gap because right the—the seniors that I
9 talk to, and I'm so sorry that some folks who were
10 supposed to be here today couldn't I guess due to
11 illness. There were people that were going to come
12 here today from a high-rise building that as of right
13 now, they still don't know what the plan is. You
14 know, and so it's just—if someone could help—help
15 them go up the stairs, down the stairs and that's—
16 that's it. But, yeah, if you just want to make a
17 closing remark, and we'll—we'll go the next panel.

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: I
19 appreciate, you know, your perspective on emergency
20 planning. There has been an incredible amount of
21 work done in New York City since Sandy not only with
22 New York City Emergency Management, but all of the
23 city agencies. We put together today and presented
24 to you a—a template, a broad stroke view of what
25 we're doing on multi levels. Local Laws that you

2 just pointed out we have complied with. We work with
3 city agencies. We work with private stakeholders.
4 We work with organizations who have client based
5 contact with individuals and information is bi-
6 directional. We have increased our outreach in
7 emergency planning at the local level whether it's,
8 you know, NYU Langone initiatives for Women with—for
9 women with disabilities, Light House Guild, St.
10 Joseph Schools for the Deaf, Woman on Wheels, Barrier
11 Free Living. I could go on and on. I have 30
12 different organizations listed here, but we are
13 targeting specific vulnerable populations, and we've
14 been working very, very diligently to meet the needs
15 that you have identified. And I'm sure there is a
16 little gap, but it is not to the degree that I—I just
17 heard, you know, you explain. I would be happy to
18 continue the conversation, and show you more
19 specifics bringing in the appropriate individuals to
20 address these, you know, questions, but—

21 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: [interposing] And—
22 and I appreciate it. Believe me, I'm not saying
23 that—that you guys have done nothing. You've done a
24 lot of work and—and it's not just your agency, FDNY,
25 NYPD and I—I have a lot of appreciation, but you just

2 mentioned that you work with other agencies. You
3 heard members of this body just tell you that NYCHA
4 still has work to do with regards to informing its
5 residents in languages that they need to hear from
6 and canvassing operations, and that they have work
7 to do there. You heard from the DOE's standpoint that
8 they still have schools that are not accessible for
9 all--they're using--they can use a shelters. So they
10 have work to do within themselves and so--

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: And there
12 will be continuing effort as well. Yes, we agree
13 with you.

14 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: It just that, you
15 know, we're--we're now four years post the storm. We
16 want to start seeing these things implemented and not
17 just kind of, you know, talked about.

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ESPOSITO: And many
19 of these items have been implemented.

20 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right. Okay, we
21 thank you, thank the panel for your time today. I'll
22 call the next panel. [background comments, pause]
23 Okay, Margi Trapani (sp?) Edith Prince--[background
24 comments] Prentiss. I'm sorry. Molly Krakowski,
25 Deborah Grief--[background comments] Greif. I'm

2 sorry, that's right. [background comments] Don't
3 tell Christopher and Pamela Soto. [pause]

4 MARGI TRAPANI: Okay, thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: We'll start this
6 way and work our way down.

7 MARGI TRAPANI: Hi. I'm Margi Trapani
8 from the Center for Independence for Disabled New
9 York, and I want to say two things right off the bat.
10 First of all, thank you so much for this hearing. I
11 think the questions have been terrific from the
12 Council Members and from you in particular. We, too,
13 are very concerned about the—the rate at which some
14 of these things are being implemented. I wrote my
15 testimony on the basis of a voluntary registry. So I
16 have—we—we don't feel that's the answer. I think in
17 hearing people talk about particular buildings or
18 communities who want to identify where the need is
19 that's terrific. A lot of the issues we have with
20 registries have to do with our population, our
21 community who have at this point a huge lack of trust
22 in what the government is going to do in terms of an
23 emergency or a disaster. Disclosure of a disability
24 is a very personal and as well as a—a relationship
25 with discrimination that goes back for a very long

2 time, as I'm sure you know. And I think the
3 expectation issue is huge. Once people register for
4 something they expect something to come back to them,
5 and in the case of Con Edison for example, what they
6 got for registering is a notification that the power
7 is going out. They do not get assistance with
8 replacing electrical equipment or getting a
9 generator. So that's a learned thing about being in
10 a registry, right? People haven't gotten what
11 they've needed, and so I think that may block some of
12 the people who would respond. I think there's a
13 tendency to think the job is done. I agree with some
14 of the things that NYCEM and some of the other
15 agencies said. I think people think well now I'm in
16 the registry. I don't have to worry, and I don't
17 think that that's true. We haven't had that
18 experience. Just as a personal note, CIDNY has over
19 50% of its staff are people with disabilities, many
20 of whom use wheelchairs or other mobility devices,
21 and during the blackout, which I recognize was years
22 ago, we had been told to register our offices with
23 the local Fire Department, which we did, and with our
24 building, which we did, and during the blackout
25 nobody came. Nobody checked in with us. Nothing

2 happened. We sent staff to the local FDNY Department
3 and they said you're on your own. We tried to find
4 our building folks. Nobody was around. Luckily, we
5 had fewer staff in the office during that time, and
6 we were able to get people out ourselves, but had we
7 had more consumers in who use wheelchairs and more
8 staff who used more complicated equipment, we
9 wouldn't have been able to get people out. So, our
10 experience tells us the registry may not be the
11 answer as well. I'm concerned about what's-what's
12 the plan after the registry is developed? You see
13 there are questions about well what are you doing now
14 and how to-what's Plan, A, B, C and D. That's the
15 question really. You can put people on a registry,
16 but if there's no follow-up plan, I don't know how
17 that helps. I-I-we're very sensitive to the fact
18 that for example we're not funded to do emergency
19 preparedness work, and so when the city relies on us
20 to do outreach, we're going to do it. We're going to
21 do it anyway. We made 900 calls during Sandy. My
22 staff came into the offices, and then the electricity
23 went out [laughs] you know. We're not funded to do
24 that work. We will do that work, but we can't do the
25 service provision. We can't get the materials to

2 people in the same way that the city can. So that's
3 an issue and how do you create those links. How do
4 you create the follow-through? That's what we hope
5 the implementation from the lawsuit will do, and I
6 can't tell you how terrific it is to have the City
7 Council on that issue. I think it's important that
8 the—the city—the portions of the city that are
9 responsible for emergency response be held
10 accountable to the timeline and to the implementation
11 of the MOUs that were established through the
12 lawsuit. [coughs] I think, you know, it's
13 concerning that first responders have sort of a
14 generalized response for people with disabilities.
15 We'll go up and we'll get them out. Well, I don't
16 know what the training is. I don't know that there's
17 specific training for people to deal with equipment,
18 brittle bone disorder, all kinds of cognitive issues,
19 I don't know what the training is, and I wish we knew
20 more. And again, I think the—the issue of registries
21 has to do with the fact that people with disabilities
22 don't necessarily stay at home. So you may need help
23 but you may have gone to the movies, and didn't there
24 was a hurricane or flooding in your area, or you may
25 have gone to the doctor, or you may have been

1 visiting someone else. That's my concern about that,
2 and then there's the issue of administration of the
3 registry. I don't know who would do that and how
4 they have the resources to keep the list updated as
5 has been discussed. But in general I think the City
6 Council has an enormous role to play in working with
7 the agencies that must respond, and keeping them to
8 their deadlines and to their promises for solutions
9 to some of these issues. I don't know what the High-
10 Rise Task Force has decided. I don't know whether
11 there is an implementation plan, and I'm—CIDNY was
12 the plaintiff in that lawsuit. So we do get
13 information. I think the issue of—I don't want to
14 take up too much time, but I think the issue of how
15 you get information down to grassroots is really key.
16 I think the CERT is terrific. It's limited. I think
17 the outreach is terrific on some levels. I don't
18 think it speaks to where people live all the time.
19 Our folks when they, you know, CIDNY serves a
20 population that is very low-income, and to tell
21 somebody to put a Go Bag together or to have two-two
22 weeks of medication available to take with them is
23 completely unrealistic. So anyway, I don't want to
24 go on, but—but again, I really appreciate the
25

2 questions that came out of this council hearing, and
3 we'd like to commit to working with you on further
4 discussions along those lines.

5 MOLLY KRAKOWSKI: Good morning. My name
6 is Molly Krakowski. I'm the Director of Legislative
7 Affairs at JASA. I'll skip—I'll skip down a little
8 bit as well, but I do want to recognize Council
9 Member Treyger as—as Chair of this committee and for
10 keeping the Hurricane Sandy and the aftermath in
11 terms of emergency planning really in the forefront
12 of our memories because it wasn't so long ago, but
13 it's certainly not going to be the last disaster that
14 the city sees. I—you know, I—I want to just speak to
15 some of the stuff that was discussed earlier is—is
16 really very relevant to JASA and things that we have
17 been doing. So just to give you a sense that the
18 storm we've partnered with the New York City
19 Department for the Aging, Department of Health and
20 Mental Hygiene, countless senior centers and
21 services, although I guess at this point Live On New
22 York, and we—we worked with Enterprise Partners, New
23 York Academy of Medicine, Rockaway United, World Care
24 Centers, American Red Cross, Volunteer Organization,
25 Active and Disaster and New York Interfaith Disaster

2 Services, Salvation Army, New York Cares, New York
3 City Service. So we've been really partnering with a
4 lot of different organizations. I think you know
5 from your district, but we have 11 residential
6 buildings with close to 2,000 apartments, and
7 community spaces. Six of those buildings are in Far
8 Rockaway, three in South Brooklyn, two in Manhattan.
9 We've internally created a very robust response to
10 emergencies as a result of what we've experienced.
11 Emergency planning has become a key priority. So
12 fortifying our buildings and infrastructure. Most of
13 the buildings at this point have generator backups,
14 which they did not have during the storm. We
15 implemented an incident command system so that we
16 have emergency response that's better coordinated,
17 and so we have monitors in many of the buildings now,
18 which have in multiple languages up to date what's
19 going on in case of an emergency. We also have a
20 special website for family members of people who live
21 in the districts that they also check in. People who
22 are living outside in New York City area and maybe
23 want to see what's happening. We've trained
24 thousands of seniors in personal preparedness,
25 developed emergency response volunteer corps of 200

1 people. They've been trained around the unique needs
2 of older adults in times of emergency. Others are
3 registered to assist in tenant evacuation in flood
4 zone, preform client safety check during winter
5 storms, assist with supply delivery in a variety of
6 emergency scenarios, and we're working right now with
7 Phillips Beth Israel School of Nursing to coordinate
8 and develop additional professional response
9 volunteers. So I think alongside you and—and those
10 teenagers going up those 20 flights of stairs, we had
11 a lot of volunteers, and—and I—JASA I think
12 recognizes certainly the intent of trying to reach
13 those people, and wouldn't it be great if we knew
14 which doors to knock on. But we're not—we're not
15 sure about having an actual volunteer list. We're—we
16 have our concerns. Some of them were mentioned
17 earlier really about how the caps, they're maintained
18 and what if someone is not reachable and—and sort of
19 where do the resources go in an emergency? But
20 speaking to the overall hearing, what we really want
21 to see are all of those other pieces that are so
22 essential then in the evacuation. So, the
23 transportation, and the transportation is spotty in
24 some of these areas. So how do we ensure that people
25

2 are able to get out before they say we're shutting
3 down all New York City Transit before an emergency,
4 and we're trying to get people out who need
5 accessibility. The shelter capacity for people with
6 disabilities, and people who are older and have
7 special needs is critical. So that's, you know,
8 really upsetting to hear that we're so far from a
9 goal of 60, which seems small, but what do I know.
10 But it seems small, and—and then just having
11 accessibility to medications if—if there is an
12 emergency and people are needing to get that
13 emergency extra prescription covered. Maybe they
14 can't afford to have multiples of weeks doses of—of
15 medicines, but certainly once something hits, we want
16 to make sure that people are able to access their
17 medications. So we thank you. We're always happy to
18 work with you, and work with any partner to try and
19 ease—ease the situation. As much as we can do it in
20 advance, we want to do it in advance, and I think
21 that was the message that we heard earlier. But
22 obviously there are plenty of people who are going to
23 choose not to, and it's their right to choose not to,
24 but there are going to be people who are going to
25 choose not to evacuate. And as providers and

2 management, and home delivered meals providers, et
3 cetera, we would love guidance.

4 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So if I just may
5 very briefly because I want to hear everybody else--

6 MOLLY KRAKOWSKI: [interposing] Yes.

7 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: --I fully-fully
8 appreciate this concern, the feedback about certainly
9 this sensitivity of the information, the privacy of
10 the information, but just to share with you another
11 horror story in my-that-that I heard directly from
12 folks in my community, and from hospital
13 administrators. There were nursing homes that
14 literally, and I hate to use this phrase, but
15 literally dumped the vulnerable residents at the
16 entrance of a hospital without any information of
17 their name, who they were, what medicine they needed,
18 what devices they needed, and they said this is your
19 problem, and the hospital had to use precious
20 resources and time to figure out who they were, what
21 medicine they needed and what machines they needed.
22 So sometimes some information could be helpful just
23 to know who you are. What do you need? I'm not
24 saying that we have to make mandatory and all that,
25 but the hospital-thank God no one lost their life,

2 but the hospital complained to me. Councilman, this
3 is unacceptable. This cannot be the city policy to
4 dump people at our door and not even tell us who they
5 are, what they need, and these are people who are
6 very vulnerable. These were in—they were in adult
7 homes. So I just want to just put that out there for
8 a moment, and that's just short.

9 MARGI TRAPANI: Can I—

10 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yes.

11 MARGI TRAPANI: If I could respond to
12 that.

13 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yes.

14 MARGI TRAPANI: In the instances of
15 nursing homes, they're required by law to have, you
16 know, a plan and they clearly didn't do it.

17 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: No.

18 MARGI TRAPANI: And—and we're—we're used
19 to hearing that in terms of people with disabilities,
20 and not having ADA policies or other accommodations.

21 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right.

22 MARGI TRAPANI: In terms of adult homes,
23 part of the issue is the transportation issue because
24 the transportation relied on was not really trained
25 to do this, and so people were just wholesale taken

2 to wherever, and some people were—I—I got a call
3 during Sandy from a guy who was in the Rockaways who
4 used a wheelchair, had thought he was safe. Couldn't
5 get out. What could he do? I contacted FEMA, and
6 the—the--e-prepped because it was allowed at that
7 time, and the only thing we could do was get an
8 ambulance to him. They evacuated him without his
9 wheelchair, which put him in a nursing home when he
10 didn't need to be in one, and he lost function.

11 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Wow.

12 MARGI TRAPANI: So by the time he could
13 go back home, he had medical problems that he hadn't
14 had before, and that speaks to the need for systemic
15 approach that includes, as was said before,
16 transportation that's accessible, and knowledgeable,
17 trained and also receptors who are accessible and
18 knowledgeable and trained. And I don't—I don't think
19 I can make more of a statement than that, but it's
20 just really critical.

21 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you.

22 FEMALE SPEAKER: I think it's important
23 to remember--

24 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yes.

25

2 FEMALE SPEAKER: --this is--that was a
3 situation that was a nursing home.

4 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Adult home.

5 FEMALE SPEAKER: Adult home, not a
6 nursing home, who were in violation of their plan
7 with--the State has to take responsibility for the
8 failure to make sure those plans are good. I was at--
9 at the Abraham doing rehab during Katrina--when
10 Katrina, and I actually went to the administrators
11 and asked--I'm a patient--to see their plan. I was
12 told I could not see it--

13 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: [interposing]

14 That's no--

15 FEMALE SPEAKER: --that it only my family
16 had the right see it. Of course, I checked with the
17 State Department of Health and, you know, CM asked et
18 cetera, et cetera and, of course, they were lying
19 through their teeth.

20 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right.

21 FEMALE SPEAKER: But I think it's
22 important that we have to be very clear about our
23 language, and now you spoke about--you referred to it
24 as a nursing home and an adult home. We can't have
25 adequate conversation unless we have a clear factual

1 situation that we can all react to, but these are
2 issues that go back to way before these--these issues.

3 MARGI TRAPANI: [interposing] Way before.

4 FEMALE SPEAKER: Excuse me. You know,
5 way--I mean this has been a problem no every--you look
6 at the situation, you know, the Minneapolis tornado,
7 the Ohio River flooding, Hurricane Andrew. All of
8 these pretty much have the same profile, and for a
9 lot of us the problem is the disparity of services on
10 the ground. You're talking senior centers, Meals On
11 Wheels, ISAP, et cetera, et cetera. Younger people
12 have no access to that. What do we have in New York
13 City? Silence and we have six independent living
14 centers none who have equivalent service. So it's--
15 it's a situation where we can't win for losing, and
16 I'm going to--I'm going to take this and say, I don't
17 want my neighbors to have my information, and I am
18 not vulnerable, and I'm really offended by repeatedly
19 hearing vulnerable, vulnerable, vulnerable. I think
20 that the real problem we're talking about is no one
21 should have been carrying up gallons of water.
22 Everyone should have had it in their apartment. You
23 know--
24

2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: [interposing]

3 That's something--

4 FEMALE SPEAKER: [interposing] -talking a
5 bout being prepared being, you know, those are the
6 things we have to talk about.

7 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yeah, but these are
8 folks who had no power for weeks. This was not a
9 matter of--there are high-rise buildings in my
10 district that had no power, no lights, nothing for
11 weeks. It's hard to be prepared for something like
12 when you live in a small apartment.

13 FEMALE SPEAKER: Don't I know that.

14 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yes.

15 FEMALE SPEAKER: I have--I have cases--

16 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yeah.

17 FEMALE SPEAKER: You know, I mean--

18 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yes, it's a case by
19 case situation.

20 MOLLY KRAKOWSKI: I just want to say, you
21 know, we--we do in terms of preparedness because I
22 hear what you're saying. You know we did so much
23 outreach before the storm, and I think what you're
24 saying is very true is prepare those people. I think
25 people who felt okay, I'm going to hunker down in my

2 house, my apartment, and I have enough water for
3 three days because that's what I was told, and I
4 have—and we made phone calls to thousands of people
5 making sure you have your medications. You have—are
6 you—are you sure you don't want to leave? The winds
7 could get really strong. The this or that. If they
8 were determined to stay, and we said okay, well, do
9 you have your water, you have your flashlight, do you
10 have—but who can know that it's going to be a week
11 without water. Who knows that? You can't know--

12 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: [interposing] And
13 so--

14 MOLLY KRAKOWSKI: --that the--something is
15 not going to start back up, and people aren't
16 accustomed--

17 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: [interposing] You're
18 right--

19 MOLLY KRAKOWSKI: --to being that way.

20 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: --and there were
21 some seniors who—who had to tell us in a different
22 language thankfully where people that spoke different
23 languages that said that their—their medication had—
24 had run out because they couldn't get down the stairs
25 or an elevator for over—over two weeks. So a

2 volunteer had to go get the name of the medication,
3 and help them get medicine. So this—the point that
4 we're raising, and we may—we—we—there's no—we're not
5 saying we have the answer here. We rely on you and
6 the folks who really who are—really on the ground to
7 come up with—with the best solution. Is that what
8 happened during and after the storm was just not
9 acceptable, and we're trying to figure out how much
10 progress have we made not just through words, and
11 through—but actual things happening on the ground.
12 The fact that an organization that is—is a party in
13 the lawsuit is now aware about some of these things
14 that was discussed by the administration. It's
15 concerning. [coughing] Council Members who are very
16 much active on the ground—I did not know about this
17 High-Rise Task Force and we heard that it was just
18 agencies on this task force, but where are the
19 residents who lived through this? Why aren't they on
20 this task force? [background comments] Oh, okay. So
21 there's a hearing right after us, but you can make a
22 follow-up point on that.

23 MARGI TRAPANI: I can?

24 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yeah.

25

2 MARGI TRAPANI: I wanted to be clear that
3 we do get reports on--

4 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: [interposing]
5 Right.

6 MARGI TRAPANI: --on--from NYCEM about
7 what's going on with the lawsuit--

8 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right.

9 MARGI TRAPANI: --but it's--it's still
10 remains unclear to me what's changed since Sandy for
11 people who live in high-rises.

12 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right.

13 MARGI TRAPANI: It's still unclear to me
14 what the implementation of what it's going to be and
15 when, and I don't know that Melba Torres was stuck in
16 her high-rise and Laurie Assad. It didn't--it wasn't
17 in the flood zone. Their power went out, and was
18 stuck and she can't ambulate and she can't get out of
19 bed by herself--

20 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: [interposing]
21 Right.

22 MARGI TRAPANI: --and couldn't get anyone
23 in. What happens to Melba? Is there anything that's
24 changed that assures her that something is going to

2 happen for her? And that's what I'm—that's what I'm
3 saying. Not that we don't get reports.

4 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: No, no, but—but
5 that's exactly what I hear from my district what has
6 changed for us who lived in 20—you know 24 apartment
7 buildings, what has changed for us? Some—some have
8 really tried to—yeah, but why don't we hear from
9 them. Yes. I'm sorry. Go ahead.

10 PAMELA SOTO: [off mic] Sure. [on mic]
11 My name is Pamela Soto and I'm here to testify in
12 support of Intro 1155 on behalf of the New York City
13 Environmental Justice Alliance. Founded in 1991,
14 NYC-EJA is a non-profit citywide membership network
15 linking grassroots organizations from low-income
16 neighborhoods and communities of color in their
17 struggle for environmental justice. NYC-EJA empowers
18 its member organizations to advocate for improved
19 environmental conditions and against inequitable
20 environmental burdens. Through these efforts, our
21 member organizations co-op around specific common
22 issues that threaten the ability of low-income
23 communities of color to thrive, and coordinate
24 campaigns designed to inform city and state policies,
25 including policies that grapple with the

disproportionate impacts of climate change disasters such as Intro No. 1155 tries to do. Vulnerable populations including people of color, low-income individuals, the disabled and the elderly are at much greater risk from extreme weather events fueled by climate change. Our New York City Climate Justice Agenda is a multi-year research and advocacy campaign to address the need for a comprehensive community-based approach to climate adaptation and community resiliency. In 2016, we released a report, which analyzed de Blasio's One NYC plan, and made several concrete recommendations for how to bolster the plan's initiatives regarding community preparedness. The recommendations in this report included creating an inventory or database of vulnerable residents to help CERT teams in their emergency response, designate community specific evacuation routes, create accessible and reliable mobility and evacuation infrastructure, complete the Community Preparedness Toolkit and more. It is our understanding that the City is currently collecting information on vulnerable populations using data from the census, voluntary surveys from NYCHA and voluntary data from Con Edison regarding life support

2 that have not formulated this as a resource for
3 community response. It is critical to balance the
4 need for a registry with the need to protect the
5 privacy of vulnerable residents in compliance with
6 HIPAA and other privacy needs. And for this reason,
7 we strongly support the decision to make the registry
8 voluntary. To make this registry useful, a strong
9 community outreach and education efforts will be
10 crucial to encourage the maximum number of people to
11 register, and the city should partner with community-
12 based organizations to structure this program as they
13 are critical partners in bolstering social resiliency
14 that is needed to adequately respond to a disaster
15 when it strikes. And I had one more comment based on
16 what the person from Emergency Management was making
17 about the Community Preparedness Toolkit, and all the
18 other approaches that the city is using currently,
19 and it was kind of presented as an either/or
20 situation. But we have seen drafts of the Community
21 Preparedness Toolkit and given them feedback, and I
22 think that that framework is actually complementary
23 to this registry and provides community-based
24 organizations the tools that would encourage
25 residents actually to register. I know he was saying

2 not-not that many people would register, but that
3 framework would actually encourage that. [background
4 comments]

5 EDITH PRENTISS: Just-I'm Edith Prentiss.
6 I'm the Executive VP-I'm the VP of Legislative
7 Affairs for DIA. I vote for four yada yada. I would
8 like to say that yada yada. [coughs] I-I would like
9 to say that I oppose the content for a registry for
10 many of the reasons that were mentioned earlier
11 including the fact that it does give an unrealistic
12 expectation of rescuing. I certainly know if the
13 nuclear reactor of the Hudson goes. I'm in
14 Washington Heights fairly close to it. Forget it.
15 First of all, if my building has electricity, which
16 it probably won't, I'm stuck up on the fourth-fourth
17 floor, not very far, but if-now the Fire Department
18 used to bring us out of the subway when-when
19 elevators were out. Now, we sort of take the, you
20 know, long around. I don't mind riding like six
21 trains to get out of the system, but you got to tell
22 me which six trains I'm going to. I can't even get
23 on a BX12 coming across the Bronx at 5 o'clock. I'm
24 going to get on a bus to be evacuated without my
25 chair, which is how I would be coming down if I were

1 being evacuated. I think it's clear to say there
2 were two situations. You have the storms sitting out
3 there in the Caribbean and may or may not get here.
4 Then we have as in the late '90s when power was
5 turned off to my community to prevent a cascade of
6 the rest of the city. Where was I? I was on an A-
7 Train. Luckily it was—became a scene, and I was
8 carried out after five—five tanks of oxygen to the
9 street. They were going to leave me on a street
10 corner of a 155th and whichever corner it was, but
11 because I wasn't breathing, I ended up at Saint
12 Luke's, but we were just—the next morning it was just
13 like okay, fine, go. I think that there has been a
14 lot of changes since then, but the reality is that in
15 an emergency, which is not necessarily the storm
16 coming, we're not going to be able to do any of these
17 things. You know, yes, we have lives. We work. We
18 date. We do assorted things. Registries are not
19 necessarily going to save us. They are unrealistic
20 and good luck. I know I'm going to be up on the
21 fourth floor in my apartment eat tuna fish, picked
22 asparagus and drinking water. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you very
25 much. [background comments]

2 DEBORAH GREIF: Well, I'm finally
3 getting—okay, good to see you Councilman Treyger.
4 I'm Deborah Greif. I am a person with disabilities.
5 I'm the daughter of a person—later mother was—was
6 disabled. I'm the parent, as you know, my son
7 Christopher and my brother Jeff. Now, we all have
8 different disabilities. I don't know because they
9 might disclose it because if I know acknowledge the
10 Department—the Mental Health Councils will try to
11 again grab me, and I really don't want to know. And
12 the Chair the Brooklyn Families Support Service
13 Advisory Council, PWDD and our representative is up
14 in Albany. Now, Families with Children with
15 Disabilities we have issues about being evacuated
16 because you see many of our children are sensitive to
17 noises, lights, different smells anything, and if our
18 kids start screaming, the shelter screams out, Shut
19 those kids up. So something for this. Can't do
20 that. Many of us sheltered in place. Yes were
21 prepared. We had batteries, water all kinds of
22 stuff, you know, our kids could handle. Of course,
23 didn't have enough tranquilizers or alcohol to calm
24 us down because truth is it stressful. Now those
25 love golf kits when it—the one time they brought

1 something really great to the Brooklyn Family Support
2 Group. They brought these pictures boards. That was
3 perfect for my population. Why? Most of our kids
4 are lucky if they can read up to a kindergarten
5 level. So looking at a picture we could figure what
6 they need. I kept asking can you make more, send
7 more? No, they couldn't. The Go Bags, when we asked
8 them to explain, they don't always work for people
9 with disabilities plus they're very expensive. You
10 know I'm not even going to talk about the medication
11 because that was brought up, but like I'm on SSI.
12 How am I going to set \$500 separate or whatever? For
13 what? I can't. It's because I have—and I'm on a
14 specialize allergy diet like 99% of our kids are as—
15 and they don't take that into account, and the other
16 reason we won't go to shelters is a couple of times
17 the ramp where you're supposed to go up, the door was
18 locked. They couldn't find the keys. So we don't
19 want to take that chance. We don't want to take
20 chances of being threatened of bullied, not my kids.
21 I don't want any of my families. We made the
22 decision to stay in places because of—we know what we
23 were going to have done to us. Now, the only part I
24 agree about a voluntary registry list, and you may
25

1 appreciate when I say this. As the lovely Mayor took
2 away our funding for these elevators—Avenue X on the
3 on the S-Train. Maybe we should do—each council area
4 should do a voluntary service. You know, these are—
5 we have all these different disabilities living in
6 our community. They need accessible transportation.
7 We need to have instead of sending us to a school
8 shelter, send us to the senior centers. Many of them
9 are more accessible, you know, or one of those like
10 on Ocean Parkway the Sephardic Center is very
11 accessible because the stairs aren't so high. It's
12 very—it's flat to get in, and we're above the you
13 have to evacuate zone. I was one block away. So I
14 saw the water come up in Sandy, and I see everyday
15 the Trump and Warbasse buildings, and I knew what you
16 went through, and I applaud you. However, I
17 couldn't' assist you because I would have stopped
18 breathing with my asthma, but I would only agree with
19 the registry for this part. I don't expect to be
20 rescued, and I told my families don't ever expect
21 that. But if that will get us necessary
22 accessibility serve—services into our area, that's
23 the only reason I'll agree to do the registry for
24 that reason. So we can have more elevators, ramps to
25

2 our train that when also a storm comes, the Mayor
3 stops Access-A-Ride so early and all the buses into
4 Coney Island. You remember. We were—everybody was
5 stranded so none of us could get out. They don't
6 have realistic time tables to get people out, and I
7 can see all those high-rises from where I live at
8 Ocean Parkway and Netgro (sic). So I thank you for
9 the hearing. I would love to work continuously with
10 you because there's a lot more that has be done, and
11 we don't have time to speak all that now, but thank
12 you.

13 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you very much
14 and I'll—I'll just wrap up by saying this. I have
15 the utmost appreciation, I truly do for everyone of
16 you that gives of yourselves so much time and effort
17 towards the service that that is, and I—I'll just
18 close by just again painting the picture of what—what
19 we witnessed on the ground in Coney Island where you
20 had a lot of governmental organizations and big
21 organizations setting up shop in a parking lot, and
22 the expectation was that somehow the supplies will
23 magically flow to 20--

24 DEBORAH GREIF: [interposing] Yeah, I saw
25 that.

2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Up 20 flights of
3 stairs.

4 DEBORAH GREIF: I saw that. I saw that.
5 You were right.

6 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, and again these
7 were folks that were without power for weeks not just
8 for—for a day or two. Something's got to change.

9 DEBORAH GREIF: [off mic]

10 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right, and—and so I
11 am all open, very open to figuring out the best path
12 forward.

13 DEBORAH GREIF: We also had the problem
14 that a lot of the stores--

15 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: [interposing] Yes.

16 DEBORAH GREIF: --sold out of water and
17 supplies that were needed.

18 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: [interposing] Well,
19 that's a whole other—yes, that a whole other
20 discussion.

21 DEBORAH GREIF: That was our problem--

22 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right, again.

23 DEBORAH GREIF: --out where we are
24 because we couldn't get restocked.

25 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I hear you.

2 DEBORAH GREIF: So we were stuck.

3 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Very true. That's
4 a future hearing so--

5 DEBORAH GREIF: Yes.

6 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: -thank you all so
7 much for being here today--

8 DEBORAH GREIF: [interposing] Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: --and this hearing
10 is adjourned. [gavel] [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 January 25, 2017