

GREEN BUILDING WORLDWIDE

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October 8, 2018

To the Honorable Members of the New York City Council,

My name is John Govan and I represent Green Building Worldwide, a strategic research, communications, and consulting firm monitoring and tracking the movement of all parties in delivering sustainable buildings and resilient infrastructure here in New York City. I write to you today to extend our dedicated support and approval of the Lead Package. We here at Green Building Worldwide actively advocate for sustainable, healthy buildings for Americans to live and work in. We appreciate your efforts to make New York buildings healthier by working to enforce the current laws regarding the presence and remediation of lead and lead-based substances more effectively. We also applaud your efforts to pass these new laws to improve the enforcement of and effectiveness of the current lead laws and standards.

The Issue

As Speaker Corey Johnson stated in the beginning of the 9/27 City Council hearing, it is indeed a government failure how the city failed to meet the goal to eliminate the lead issue in New York City by 2010. The fact that 4,200 children tested positive for lead poisoning in 2017 when the issue was to be eliminated in 2010 is a tragedy. We completely share these sentiments expressed by the speaker as well as the rest of the city council. The New York public continues to endure this costly, negative externality on account of the inability of the current system to remedy this issue.

The Demand

Many fail to understand how addressing this externality has the potential to benefit nearly every party involved. The building owners and managers stand to benefit in the long-run if they would abide by these lead laws and regulations. **We in the green building industry especially follow the lead laws because the sustainable building movement will collapse if these buildings, affordable and otherwise, are not healthy to live in.** The public demand for healthier living spaces, in addition to vital need for healthier affordable housing for those who are unable to choose to live elsewhere, must be met.

Impact on the Industry

We absolutely support all 25 bills you are proposing, as each will do much to improve New York City's lead conditions and public health issues. In direct relation to the green building industry in New York, we notably applaud measures Int 0865-2018, Int 0874-2018, Int 0919-2018, and Int 0891-2018 to improve building standards and regulations regarding lead

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issues and to promote interagency cooperation to address these issues. In addition, we appreciate bills Int 0422-2018, Int 0868-2018, Int 0873-2018, Int 0891-2018, and Int 0916-2018 to directly address lead-based paint and lead present in drinking and cooking water in private or multi-family dwellings across New York.

Education and Outreach

We also highly support any efforts of these bills to inform and educate the New York public on their rights and the proper methodologies to address issue with lead, such as Int 0709-2018 to provide an online interactive map on lead issues, Int 0881-2018 to establish an education and outreach program on child lead poisoning to New Yorkers from all walks of life, and T2018-2927 to increase the accessibility of water testing kits to the New York public.

Accountability

As the proposed 25 bills will address the lead issue, the people of New York cannot abide a new series of unenforced laws. It was discussed vividly during the hearing of 9/27 how few to no landlords were held accountable for failing to or blatantly disregarding the current New York lead laws. Green Building Worldwide supports these bills only as long as they are enforced, and the violators of these measures are prosecuted accordingly.

Penalties

New York City could improve on this serious matter by exploring and adopting the successful lead programs of other states who do not struggle with prosecution. For instance, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts enforces among the toughest lead laws in the nation. This state poses high monetary fines similar to New York. However, Massachusetts threatens to imprison individuals who willingly violate their lead laws up to 3 or 6 months in addition to monetary fines as described in the bill 105 CMR section 460.210 and 460.220. In addition, Massachusetts also holds similar processes in place to protect families with small children and pregnant women from eviction due to lead issues. Green Building Worldwide supports any incentives the City Council may offer the landlords to abide by these bills. New York City must hold the offending landowners accountable and offer swift justice if her lead issues are to be eradicated.

Our Pledge

To show our support for the lead package, Green Building Worldwide will spread awareness of all these measures to address the city's lead epidemic once the bills are confirmed. Through our advocacy, we will enlighten other organizations in our industry on the methodologies to address lead issues in accordance with the law. We will also make the case for the many

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benefits to be enjoyed by following these regulations, and how these laws actually benefit all parties in the long-run. In addition, we are able to spread awareness of the rights and methodologies available to New Yorkers regarding the presence of lead.

Thank you for your all efforts to address the prolonged lead issue in New York City. Please reach out to us if you would like to discuss this matter in further detail. In addition, please let us know what we can do to aid the movement against lead across the five boroughs.

Sincerely,

John Govan, Environmental Economics Fellow
Green Building Worldwide