

TESTIMONY OF STEWART O'BRIEN BEFORE THE  
HOUSING AND BUILDINGS COMMITTEE OF THE NEW  
YORK CITY COUNCIL ON JUNE 8, 2009 ON INTRO. 994

My name is Stewart O'Brien. For the past 12 years I have served as Executive Director of the Plumbing Foundation of the City of New York, Inc. which is a clearinghouse and educational forum for the plumbing industry. I am here today to testify regarding Intro 994.

To help assure that the tragedy that occurred at the Deutsche Bank building does not happen again, Intro. 994 requires, among other things, that the owners of existing buildings have the exposed portions of standpipe and sprinkler systems painted. This will help prevent someone from accidentally cutting these critically important safety systems. Unfortunately, Intro 994 allows ANYONE to identify which pipes are components of these critical safety systems. A janitor, handyman, etc. is authorized to identify the pipes—that is both ridiculous and dangerous. Licensed professionals skilled in these life safety systems, either PEs, RAs

or licensed master plumbers or fire suppression contractors, should be the only ones authorized to identify these safety pipes. The Council needs to amend Intro. 994 to include this provision.

The bill is also deficient in that it contains no mechanism to help assure compliance. It simply states that the pipes in existing buildings be painted by a certain date but no requirement that the owner affirmatively state that the identification and painting was performed. Under the existing version of Intro. 994 how would the City of New York know whether owners have complied? Is the City planning to inspect ALL buildings?

Without these two changes, we are quite likely to be back here after another tragedy caused by a handyman cutting a sprinkler or standpipe.

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 994 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 6/8/09

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: TERENCE OBRIEN

Address: 721 5<sup>th</sup> St Apt 10B

I represent: Plumbing Foundation

Address: 44 West 28<sup>th</sup> St Fl. 17

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Name: Mona Seghal

Address: General Counsel

I represent: Department of Buildings

Address: 280 Broadway

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Name: James Colgate

Address: Assistant Commissioner Tech Affairs

I represent: Department of Buildings

Address: 280 Broadway

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms