

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

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Start: 1:03 p.m.
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HELD AT: Remote Hearing

B E F O R E: Laurie Cumbo
Majority Leader

Fernando Cabrera
CHAIRPERSON

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Keith Powers
Ben Kallos
Bill Perkins
Ydanis Rodriguez
Kalman Yeger
Alan N. Maisel

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

Lisette Camilo, Commissioner
Department of Citywide Administrative Services

Corinne Schiff, Deputy Commissioner for
Environmental Health
Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Steve Banks, First Deputy Commissioner
Office of Labor Relations

Jason Barnet, architect
Housing Authority

Kevin Bogle, Secretary
DC 37 Local 375

John Forrester
Local 375

Elizabeth Eastman, member
Local 374

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Broadcasting should be starting momentarily.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay. Sergeant Biondo. We can start with the opening.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to today's remote New York City Council hearing on the Committee on Governmental Operations. At this time, would all panelists please turn on their video? Once again, would all panelists please turn on their video? To minimize disruption, please place electronic devices on vibrate or silent mode and, if you wish to submit testimony, you may do so at testimony@council.nyc.gov. Once again, that is testimony@council.nyc.gov. Thank you for your cooperation. We are ready to begin today's hearing. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much. Let's gavel in.

[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Good afternoon. I am Council member Fernando Cabrera, Chair of the Committee on Governmental Operations. I want to start off by thanking the members of the Committee joining us today. Majority Leader Laurie Cumbo,

Council member Perkins and Council member Kallos.

Today, the Committee will be hearing one piece of legislation that will help chart the course for the restarting of our city's government and the potential return of hundreds of thousands of city employees and to in person workplaces. Introduction number 1950, sponsored by Majority Leader and Council member Laurie Cumbo, will require the Mayor to designate a city restart officer for the purpose of recommending both citywide and agency-specific policies and protocols to promote the safe reopening and operations of city agencies in response to COVID-19 in coordination with the city's public health experts at the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. This bill will also require city agencies to develop and publish their own policies and protocols to be reviewed by the city restart officer for the purpose of promoting compliance with applicable laws and regulations and for coordinating the citywide effort to mitigate the ongoing public health risk posed by COVID-19. In a moment, we will hear from our majority leader about the details of her legislation. So, for now, I will simply say COVID-19 is deadly serious. We must take every precaution as we begin

planning a return to working in office person. The risk to human lives should not be downplayed for the sake of bureaucratic efficiency. I think we, as a city-- as the city government-- have learned a lot over the last three months about the resiliency and flexibility of our city's workforce. We have also learned about the urgent infrastructural needs that our city must address in order to make work from home a viable possibility for all nonessential city employees. As we plan a return, even partial, we must take the advice of public health experts into account. I look forward to hearing from the administration today as we-- as well as our local unions and all the stakeholders about the ways in which our city can make public health and workplace safety a priority while beginning to reopen our government. I want to thank our Majority Leader, Council member Laurie Cumbo, for introducing this piece of legislation. I also want to give a special thanks to our Committee staff. They do such a wonderful work. CJ Murray, Emily Forjohn [sp?], Leslie Carr, Sebastian Bacci, and the many central staff working behind the scenes to make this remote hearing operate smoothly like no other municipality.

I also want to thank my own legislative director, Clara Michael Bain, for making this hearing possible. I would like now to invite Majority Leader Cumbo, sponsor of Intro 1950, the bill we are hearing today to give a statement.

MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you, Chair Cabrera. Can you hear me? Chair Cabrera?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We can hear you.

MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Okay. Thank you. Chair Cabrera, I want to thank you so much for hosting this particular hearing. I know that this is also particularly important to you because your family has been intimately touched with COVID-19 and I am so glad that they are recovering and that you and your family are healthy and safe at this time. I want to thank everyone that's on the call today for this particular hearing because all over the country, we are hearing the numbers rise in the amounts of COVID cases that are being reported. We certainly do not want to have a second wave of COVID-19, which would be devastating, to our nation and to our city. So it is so important that we put the proper precautions in place and make sure that we open New York City safely. And so often, New York City

continues to be and remains the center of what happens in the rest of the country and the rest of the world. People certainly look to us towards issues around guidance, best practices, and we want to make sure that here, in New York City, we are doing it right. And this particular legislation will allow us to do just that. New York City operates one of the biggest bureaucracies in the world: its city government. The city employs over 300,000 people, more than any other city in the United States and even some state governments. Throughout COVID-19, our city agencies quickly adapted to the changes that were necessary to ensure New York's health and safety. However, we are still experiencing devastating loss. As of yesterday, there were just over 207,000 confirmed cases of the coronavirus. As a result, many New Yorkers are excited, but apprehensive about opening. And rightfully so. We're grateful of the work that agencies are doing to reopen safely. All we need now is a restart officer to make sure that the city is relating it's best practices to every New Yorker. As I often say, it takes a village. And that is exactly what we are doing here today. We want to make sure that we are

putting forth the best practices to make sure that New York City opens safely and that people that are coming back to work, our workforce who are moms, dads, grandmothers, grandfathers, sisters, uncle, nieces and nephews, that people are coming back to their home safely after working. We want to make sure that we're providing all the necessary elements to do that. I want to thank all my team, Jason Herr, my legislative director. I want to thank Alicia Mercedes, as well as my chief of staff, Tasha Young, and all that worked so hard to get us to this point and, again, I want to thank you, Fernando Cabrera. You have been a great partner and friend through this process. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much, Majority Leader, and thank you for your friendship, as well, and for caring. You always have a big heart regarding those. It's specifically those who are hurting in our society. I also want to recognize we've been joined also by Council member Yeger. So good to see you, Council member. And, with that, I want to now turn it over to our moderator, Committee counsel, CJ Murray, to go over some procedural items.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Can you hear me?

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Yes. Now we can.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. I am CJ Murray, counsel to the Governmental Operations Committee of the New York City Council. Before we begin testimony, I want to remind everyone that you will be on mute until you are called on to testify, at which point you will be unmuted by the host. I will be calling on panelists to testify. Please listen for your name to be called. The first panel is to give testimony today will be Department of Citywide Administrative Services Commissioner Lisette Camilo. In addition, the following representatives will be available to answer questions. From DCAS, Executive Deputy Commissioner Quinton Haines and Don Pinnock. From the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Deputy Commissioner Corinne Schiff, and from the Office of Labor Relations, First Deputy Commissioner and General Counsel, Steve Banks. I will call on you when it is your turn to speak. During the hearing, if a Council member would like to ask a question of the administration or a specific panelist, please use the Zoom raise hand function and I will call on you in order. We will be limiting Council member questions to five minutes, which

includes the time it takes the panelists to answer your questions. Please note that, for ease of this virtual hearing, there will not be a second round of questioning outside of questions from the Committee Chair. All hearing participants should submit written testimony to testimony@council.nyc.gov.

Before we begin testimony, I will administer the oath. Commissioner Camilo, Executive Deputy Commissioner Haines, Executive Deputy Commissioner Pinnock, Deputy Commissioner Schiff, and First Deputy Commissioner Banks. Please raise your rights hands. I will call on each of you individually for a response. Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth before this committee and to respond honestly to Council member questions? Commissioner Camilo?

COMMISSIONER CAMILO: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Executive Deputy Director Haines?

EXECUTIVE DEPUTY DIRECTOR HAINES: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Executive Deputy Director Pinnock?

EXECUTIVE DEPUTY DIRECTOR PINNOCK: I

do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Deputy Commissioner

Schiff?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SCHIFF: Yes.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: First Deputy

Commissioner Banks?

FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BANKS: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

Commissioner Camilo, you may begin.

COMMISSIONER CAMILO: Good afternoon,

Chair Cabrera, members of the Committee on

Governmental Operations, and Majority Leader Council

member Cumbo. I'm Lisette Camilo, Commissioner of

the Department of Citywide Administrative Services.

Today, I am joined by representatives from the Office

of Labor Relations and the Department of Health and

Mental Hygiene, two agencies that have been critical

partners with DCAS throughout the pandemic and that's

helped shape city workforce policies in response to

this public health emergency. The COVID-19 pandemic

has taken an enormous toll on the people of New York

City and communities all over the world. This burden

has not been easily distributed and black and brown

New Yorkers have been disproportionately harmed. From this terrible loss of human life to the economic pain felt by millions of our neighbors, the reality we live in today is very different from anything we could have imagined just a few short months ago. To meet this unprecedented challenge, the city has had to marshal its resources and rethink all aspects of government operations. By implementing telework policies, facilitating the widespread use of face coverings, promoting healthy hand hygiene, instituting social distancing and other health and safety precautions, we kept city government functioning while protecting our workforce. We are working diligently to ensure we continue to do so. Today, despite enormous progress, there continues to be community transmission of COVID-19 in New York City. Slowing the spread of coronavirus and preventing a new wave of cases requires that all New Yorkers, including city employees, maintain what the Health Department called the core four. Staying home when sick, wearing face coverings, practicing health hand hygiene, and staying six feet apart. These four fundamental practices also guide the city's plan to return to the workplace and expand operations. For

those employees who do not have to physically be at work, this means ongoing telecommuting, which helps keep them safe and reduces density in public transit and at worksites for those that must return to the workplace. For employees that work out of neighborhoods, it requires reimagining certain protocols. And for those who must work in the office, it means reconfiguring our space, increasing the frequency of cleaning and disinfection, and expanding communication. As city employees adjust to a new normal, it will include daily health screenings and reinforcing habits designed to keep ourselves and others safe. As we know from the experience of the last several months, our understanding of this disease is changing rapidly and recommendations will evolve. We will likewise adjust plans when warranted by the facts. Planning for a return to the workplace is ongoing and we are working collaboratively across city agencies to examine best practices and develop policies that protect the health and safety of city employees. We intend to maintain this steady state. Teleworking for those who do not need to be at a work site and reevaluating, as necessary, based on the trajectory of the virus. We acknowledge that there

are staff who cannot perform their required tasks from home. And we are reviewing mandates and recommendations from New York State and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to ensure return to the workplace is grounded in a health and safety approach. Based on this work, the administration is developing formal guidance and protocols that will be issued to all agencies both for any return to the office occur. The administration has approached this guidance with four categories in mind. Preparing buildings, preparing workspaces, preparing the workforce, and communication. Preparing buildings includes inspecting and preparing building systems, entrances, and common areas and includes establishing and implementing new building policies and practices to control access, promoting social distancing, and maintaining building health. Preparing the workspace is a closely related category had also includes establishing an implementing policies and protocols for promoting social distancing through a strategic approach to the reconfiguration and use of work spaces. Preparing the workforce means developing and implementing policies and practices relating the return of staff, which staff will return, how staff

will return, policies with respect to working remotely, and steps to protect employee health and wellbeing. Also, communication will be key in tying all of these categories together. City employees need to understand the steps their agencies have taken to protect our safety and ensuring an orderly process for returning to work. It's important that agencies are transparent, accessible, and make extra effort to answer questions and address challenges with two-way communication. This administration is taking a holistic approach to the planning and execution of a process for returning employees to worksites. And we want to make sure this process is orderly and safe above all else. The city cannot effectively serve its constituents unless its workforce is safe, healthy, and equipped for success. This has been a collaborative effort between the Mayor's Office and city agencies and no single individual has been at the helm of these efforts. We welcome the city Council's input and believe that caps intro 1950 support the administration goal of creating a safe and healthy workplace for city agencies across-- I'm sorry. For city employees across every agency. We look forward to further

dialogue with the city Council on this very important matter. There will be more to say as guidelines are formalized, but I am happy to take questions about the categories of actions and information that may be included in the city's guidance. Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Commissioner Camilo. Next, we will hear questions from Chair Cabrera, followed by Majority Leader Cumbo. Panelists, please stay unmuted, if possible, during this question and answer period. Chair Cabrera, please begin.

CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much. Commissioners, it's good to see you again. I know you have, in the last few months, to manage [inaudible 00:18:50] tremendous amount of work and setting systems and structures throughout DCAS and working with other agencies. I want to personally thank you for all the work that you're doing. I know you have worked-- you're still in overdrive right now, especially now that we're getting ready to enter phase two. And so, with that, I want to jump into a few questions. How many city employees have started working from home? How many do you anticipate will

start working from the phases-- as we enter into new phases?

COMMISSIONER CAMILO: So, my partner at OLR can talk about specific numbers, but, generally, about two thirds of the workforce, if I am not mistaken, was able to transition it to a work from home status. In terms of how many will be returning and when, that is not something that I can answer right now. That is too early to tell as yet. Agencies are-- you know, have to start the analysis of really looking at their workforce and looking at how we are going to win back any services that have been off-line, you know, since the start of the public health emergency. In phasing in, making decisions on how to phase in their workforce. So, that work, you know, is starting. We are producing guidance to again to see, but as they start doing the deeper dive into their operations to plan for that return. So, it is too soon to give actual numbers right now, but as that work and analysis can use and of plan is finalized, we won't be able to give those numbers.

CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: So, the jazz they owe that more detailed. In phase 1, did you have city workers come back to the worksite?

COMMISSIONER CAMILO: Under phase 1, I think that there were some agencies that might have brought back some level of employees that tied directly to the industries that were coming back online. So, as, for example, with construction reopening, you might have employees of the Department of Buildings now had worksite to go inspect. Those were very, you know, limited examples, since there was a limited opening and that every agency would undertake that analysis and make that determination on their own.

CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: So, you have phase 2 coming on Monday, I believe. And you have not received from agencies-- just curious-- their plans and numbers or amount of workers that are coming back? I mean, it is Tuesday already and Monday is coming. Do you have any idea for phase 2?

COMMISSIONER CAMILO: No. Not globally. I think that they agencies are looking at the overall operations and starting to analyze how they are going

to bring back their employees and how many. But we do have finalized plans or--

CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Phase 2.

COMMISSIONER CAMILO: Finalize numbers as of yet.

CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: All right. So, when are we going to have that since we are talking about six days from now?

COMMISSIONER CAMILO: I think that for-- we are finalizing the guidance now and should be ready in the next couple of days to provide for agencies. Once they have that framework to really put together a formalized plan, we think that, in the next couple of weeks we will start getting some additional information from agencies as to what they are thinking and how they are approaching a phased approach to returning to the office.

CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Well, which agencies do you anticipate for Monday having the largest amount of the workforce return back? Do you know that now?

COMMISSIONER CAMILO: At this point, as I mentioned, the Department of Buildings--

CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Okay.

COMMISSIONER CAMILO: we know will be--
is slowly starting to, perhaps, going on their
workforce. Although, my understanding is that they
had a number of their employees were or be active.
So, I don't know that they have that much additional
staff coming back to the office, but I know that,
because construction is open, you know, yeah.
There's certainly more active.

CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Does the city
envision any savings in the future such as [inaudible
00:24:02] city office space or other type of savings
we could get creative with?

COMMISSIONER CAMILO: So, I think it is a
little too soon to tell at this point we are still
working on how that phased in approach is going to
work. We are not sure whether or not there is going
to be underutilized space because, remember, when
workers come back, we have to ensure that they are
socially distanced with each other. So, that
analysis has to be finalized both for, you know, we
can look to see what underutilized space we have.
But, you know, that process would be ongoing and, you
know, conversations will continue to happen. And,
obviously, you know, given all that is going on, we

want to make sure that we are thoughtful and our approach and continuing the analysis.

CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: So, what do you think that you would be able to make that analysis? When do you think you would feel comfortable that we are in a place that we can say, okay. We can make this analysis.

COMMISSIONER CAMILO: again, I wish I could give you a timeframe, because we are still at the beginning of the planning stages to phase in and, until we are actively living out the plan and seeing how things shake out, you know-- we've never done this before, right? This is a very new thing for all of us and so we-- I would rather be conservative in the approach and really be-- in now, let's deal with this issue of, you know, making sure that our people are safe, that we are providing, you know, as safe workplace for a week, you know, get on to other, you know, goals. That we are-- like I said, it is an ongoing process and we are certainly going to look under every rock.

CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Well, I'm just going to ask one last question here. Pursuant to Intro 1950, sponsored by my colleague, Majority

Leader Cumbo, who was the administration designate to an act as the chief restart officer and why it is their current title, agency, and roll? And please describe their qualifications and work in this area up to this point.

COMMISSIONER CAMILO: I'm sorry. I'm having trouble hearing you.

CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: I'm sorry. So, my question is-- do you want me to start from the beginning?

COMMISSIONER CAMILO: Sorry. Yes.

CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Okay. It's okay. It's all good. This is what we do. Pursuant to Intro 1950-- can you hear me?

COMMISSIONER CAMILO: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: As sponsored by Majority Leader Cumbo, who would the administration designate to act as the chief restart officer? What is their current title, agency, and role and please describe their qualification. And work in this area up to this point?

COMMISSIONER CAMILO: So, I think that we-- As I mentioned in my opening statement, there is not been one entity that has, you know, ownership

over this exercise. It really has been a partnership across multiple agencies and with the Mayor's Office. So, that is something that I think we would like to discuss and continue exploring because it deals with health. It deals with, I know, agency operations. Every agency is very different and has specific means that only the Commissioner really has the ability to make determinations about and has the expertise to make decisions about what the needs for their agencies are. So, it's not clear to me that there is an obvious, you know, person. So, I think, because it is a shared-- it's been a shared exercise with a number of different agencies. You know, it is something that, you know, we would be open, you know, to talk about and explore because it's not-- there is not an obvious person that is [inaudible 00:28:19].

CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Well, Commissioner, that dialogue that is, I think, it's a good time to pass it on down to our Majority Leader Cumbo because I am sure she is going to want to have that little dialogue. But let me also recognize that we have been joined by Council member Maisel. So, with that, let me pass that on to my colleague.

MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you, Chair Cabrera and thank you so much, Commissioner, for your testimony today. I have quite a few questions around some of the follow up questions that Council member Cabrera brought up, but I first want to start off by asking how does your agency and the administration feel about Intro 1050? What are your thoughts on it, more specifically? Do you think it's a good piece legislation? Is it one you are excited about implementing? What are your thoughts about it?

COMMISSIONER CAMILO: I mean, I think that we're very much aligned in the goals and I think that the legislation speaks to a thoughtful process for agencies to plan out their return to the office functions. And that's what we've been working on. You know, we're putting together a framework and guidance for agencies to use in thinking through how to approach the return to work. Right? So we focus on the buildings, the workspaces, the policies that have to be, you know, looked at for the workforce. And, frankly, I mean, what we want is to ensure the health and safety of our workforce. And that's clear in the goal of the Intro and that's definitely what is driving our work so far with the guidance.

MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Do you think that the interagency approach, that there is capacity and there is expertise amongst the interagencies to do this work as it currently exists or do you think that an office and/or an office, rather, would be more ideal in terms of coordinating all of the interagencies, but also bringing in people that have the level of expertise that's necessary to do this? Have people with that level of expertise been brought in or are you utilizing existing staff?

COMMISSIONER CAMILO: We have been working that have the expertise to inform the guidance. So, the answer is that there is expertise across the city to do this and I think back, as agencies plan to bring stuff back on mine, you know, every agency is different. Every agency has a different operation, different needs. Different, you know, size. You know? So, I think that it is not-- it can't be a cookie cutter approach--

MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: All right.

COMMISSIONER CAMILO: It has to be very thoughtful exercise that agencies should really-- agencies have their own expertise on how they need to operate and function and they are the best experts to

make the determination and decisions on how to bring things on in a phased way. So, you know, utilizing the guidance that, you know, lives across the city in terms of the things that are driving the health and safety approach like the Health Department weighing in and advising us on what the proper practices are with respect to, you know, how to prevent the spread. The building folks--

MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Uh-hm.

COMMISSIONER CAMILO: will have expertise to weigh in on it, as well. So, we have the expertise that live across the agencies.

MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Well, let me ask you this question. But what you are describing, essentially, means that there is no particular place where you could say the buck stops here. So, it's kind of a shared approach and agencies talk with other agencies and then it seems like someone in that agency kind of determines that this is the best way, but it doesn't seem like there is a these are the guidelines and the protocols that have to be established. And it appears as if there is not a go to in terms of the buck stops here. Is that accurate?

COMMISSIONER CAMILO: No. So, the guidance that I had spoken about that, in partnership with other agencies, like the Department of Health, like the Department-- Like Office of Labor Relations, Law Department and DCAS, we've put together-- we are putting together the framework to approach the return and it includes best practices from experts, not only in the city, but throughout the state and country. So, we want to make sure that, for example, all of our guidance will be consistent with the state guidance and the CDC guidance so that all of those substantive things that agencies have to think about and consider and implement are-- must be done. So, there are things in our guidance that our requirements.

MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Uh-hm.

COMMISSIONER CAMILO: Like screening employees upon entry. So, that is something that is not a suggestion, but a requirement. And that was developed by the Department of Health. They developed a tool, a screening tool, that will be incorporated and shared with every city agency. So, that is just one example of a substantive requirement that our guidance sets forth. So, ultimately, the

guidance will provide, you know, specific requirements, best practices, and recommendations for agencies to review and implement depending on what their operations require, what their space looks like, what their workforce does. So, you know, it's not--

MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Uh-hm.

COMMISSIONER CAMILO: a suggestion, but it's very thorough and thoughtful approach to the planning.

MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Let me ask you. So, let's say different agencies, they get there-- let's look at city Council. Plants use that for an example. My office. Is there something or someone in place that is going to come in to make sure that I am being an effective manager and leader? So, for example, if there are rules about desk space need to be six feet apart, there needs to be hand sanitizer at the door, there needs to be face masks worn, there can only be occupants the size so many people in this particular office, is there a task force, if you will, that is going to be looking to see if these appropriate protocols are being implemented and put into place?

COMMISSIONER CAMILO: Are you asking about like an enforcement?

MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Correct. Kind of similar--

COMMISSIONER CAMILO: function?

MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: to what [inaudible 00:35:28] have. So, the restaurants have that element where people come in. They check to see if they are in violation. You know, if there are rats and rodents or, you know?

COMMISSIONER CAMILO: Right.

MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Egresses or [inaudible 00:35:41] and that sort of thing.

COMMISSIONER CAMILO: So, the and enforcement function and I think, if you are referring to what the restaurant have to abide by, you know, there is an enforcement infrastructure with the Department of Health with others city agencies that have that ability and authority under, you know, their statutes tend to. We do not have an enforcement part of the guidance. Unless, I mean, the Introduction have enforcement function? I don't believe it did, either, because I think that what is important and through as we think through the--

MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: I'm looking for new legislative ideas.

COMMISSIONER CAMILO: So, you know, I think that, you know, ultimately, I don't-- the thing that is certain across the agencies, right, is that everyone is looking to add to what is most secure and safe for its workforce. So, I don't think that anyone will want to gamble-- take a gamble on the health and safety of their workforce. And I think that the guidance that we have been putting in gather incorporates requirements, just like the-- you know, to align itself with what the state and federal government are advising and an additional recommendations from experts in the field to consider and apply to every unique circumstance. And I think that, with that information, all of those resources, those are all the tools that agency hands, you know, will be able to use to develop a thoughtful approach to their return to the office.

MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: I mean, I think it is going to be critical to have an office of swords that is able to work with the agencies in terms of, not only enforcement, but also guidance and the sense of there is going to be some handholding. So, for

example-- I mean, this is my greatest fear, as well. Let's say, because we are all waiting with baited breath in terms of when our offices are going to reopen. And what I can see, it doesn't seem like there is a whole lot of time when we are going to know when that is going to be and when it happens. So, let's say you say next Friday your and then I will say, oh, we don't have any hand sanitizer. Hey, send one of the end's with 20 bucks to go get some hand sanitizer for the office and we will just squirt everybody with some hand sanitizer when they come in the office. Like, my fear is that that could actually happen in terms of how much preparation and lead time, how much-- should we start ordering like hand sanitizer is in bulk for our office is the same way we do with many other supplies and things like that? Like how do we get prepared for the real deal of reopening our offices again?

COMMISSIONER CAMILO: So, I think--

MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: [inaudible

00:38:49]

COMMISSIONER CAMILO: [inaudible

00:38:51]

MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: offices.

COMMISSIONER CAMILO: So, I think it's important to note that the plans that agency use would be putting together after receiving the guidance will, literally, be a checklist of the things that they are going to do in order to prepare to receive their employees back into the office. And that won't happen until those plans are complete with enough lead time in order to adequately prepare. So, you know, we are not going to do a hairpin turn and say, all right. Monday you are back in. Go for it. You know, just like I said, it is a measured and thoughtful approach to the, not only putting together the plan, but phasing it in. And you know, making decisions on who, when, and where are going to come back. So, it is not a giant wave. But, and depending on the agencies and what their needs are, you know, it's an exercise of planning and making sure that they are ready to execute before they actually execute.

MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: I also want to add I think it would be responsible once the offices are open very quickly that all city employees go through a training the same way that we go for sexual harassment training and other forms of training so

that people can know how to responsibly function and coexist in their perspective offices. So, I think that training is going to be critical and very important to educating people about how to work differently and the realities of the transmission of this particular virus. My other question goes into what countries are you working hand-to-hand with to understand best practices and to understand what has been the forward steps and backward steps that other countries, rather, who are more advanced because they have gone through this with, maybe, a 3 to 4 month lead time over us, how they are faring in their restart?

COMMISSIONER CAMILO: So, I think I'm going to toss that over to my colleague from the Health Department.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SCHIFF: Sure. Thank you. Good afternoon. Corinne Schiff, Deputy Commissioner for Environmental Health at the Health Department. And it is an important question and, as part of the Health Departments ongoing response to the public health emergency, we have got multiple people whose job it is to do exactly what you said. To be-- they are our principal scientific advisors

and they are monitoring what is happening around the world and they are monitoring the scientific literature of all sorts and all of that goes into the guidance that we develop that we have been sharing with DCAS and that we share with New Yorkers on our website. So, that is very much a part of how we have been managing throughout the public health emergency and, as you know and as we all have seen, this is evolving as we, around the world, learn about this virus and how to respond. And that is why our guidance, just like the guidance from the state and from the CDC has continued to change. Our guidance has continued to change, as well, as we monitor what is happening in practice and other jurisdictions and the scientific literature.

MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Can you give me an example of a country that you are working with and an example of something that we have learned as a result of their best practices?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SCHIFF: So, I'll give you an example from this morning that our principal scientific advisor reported to us that he is monitoring-- I'm sure everyone is seeing that, in Beijing, there are some cases that they are

monitoring their and that they are doing investigations around a market and an area where they have monitored contacts for people who become ill. And so, we are tracking closely what they are learning there and we will see what those results are and we will take lessons learned from that to our guidance.

MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Uh-hm. I was hoping to get more out of that answer in terms of some of the things that we could take back to our own offices, but I am sure my colleagues will be able to dig deeper into that. I am just going to close with this one question and give my colleagues an opportunity to ask questions. How has the administration engaged in unions and discussions on how to proceed with sending personnel back to work? Have those conversations began in terms of working with our different labor unions and sharing best practices with them and how that will be handled?

COMMISSIONER CAMILO: So, I think that the representative from OLR can be able to answer that better than I can.

MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Okay.

COMMISSIONER CAMILO: Steve?

FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yep.

Thank you, Commissioner Camilo. And, yeah. So, OLR, we've been in constant contact with our fiscal unions and, you know, the city, as an employer, is in a little bit of a different position when talk about phase 1, phase 2, etc. because, as Lisette appropriately mentioned, that we have had many of our employees working from home since late March, so also have a cohort of employees, police officers, EMTs, DEP employees, parks employees, who have continued to work, right? So, we have had a segment of our workforce who we have enabled to refine our protocols and practices and rules and regulations as they have continued to work in March, April, May, in June. But then we are in constant contact. And, you know, District Council 37 is probably the main union that would be affected by sort of a return to the office with office-based staff and, you know, Commissioner Campion [sp?] and myself and the other-- all our negotiators are in daily-- at least daily contact with our colleagues at DC 37. In some of the issues that Lisette had mentioned about preparing the workplaces and HVAC systems and ensuring that cubicles are six feet apart, those are conversations

that we have already been having, certainly with DC 37, as the citywide civilian union. And we have gotten questions from other groups, as well. You know, over these past several months. Different agencies have designated different groups of employees as essential or nonessential and we, you know, work through that-- work through those issues with our labor partners. Obviously, you know, there has always been areas of complete agreement, but we have been able to work through those issues together.

MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Okay. I'm going to turn it back to the Chair for our colleagues to ask questions.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Majority Leader Cumbo. I will now call on Council members if they have used the Zoom raise hand function. Council members, if you would like to ask a question and you have not yet raised your hand, please do so now. You will have a total of five minutes to ask your question and receive an answer from the panelist. The Sergeant-at-arms will keep a timer and I will let you know when your time is up. Once I have called on you, please wait for the Sergeant to announce that you may begin before asking your question. Seeing no

hands raised, I will not turn it back to Chair Cabrera to ask any follow up questions.

CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much. And I want to thank the Majority Leader for your in-depth questions. For Department of Deputy Commissioner, I just wanted to follow up just with one question. Is there any more details to the question that she asked regarding when we returned back to our office says? I saw your motion like you wanted to say more. Is there anything else that you could enlighten us with and give us insight?

COMMISSIONER CAMILO: No. I must have given an expression that suggested I had something to add. Now. I think, you know, I agree with everything that the Commissioner has said.

CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Is there anything happening right now that worries you? Anything regarding going into phase 2 and then hopefully phase 3 and phase 4 that we don't have in place that we should and order to avoid COVID-19 becoming an increasing threat?

COMMISSIONER CAMILO: So, I think you mentioned start date for phase 2. You know, it's been a busy day, so I may have missed some news had I

don't know that we have got and the start date for phase 2. And I think, you know, what is really important is what we call the core four. You heard about that and Commissioner Camilo's testimony. About Stan when you are sick worrying your face covering, staying six feet away from other people, and practicing healthy hand hygiene. So, washing hands and using hand sanitizer. And we need New Yorkers to adapt all those practices into our daily living. Those need to calm our habit for the next many, many, many months. We are all in this together. My actions affect you. Your actions affect to me. I think that the point about communication that is a key point of DCAS' thinking and how they are guiding the agencies to reopen is critical. Employees will need to know how to implement the core four. How those will be implemented in their offices. Agency leaders will need to be able to express that to their employees. And that is really what this is about. And it is these four sort of simple measures, but how you implement them is all in the details of the different worksites, as you have been hearing in the testimony. And that's why it has to be left up to each agency to

figure out how to implement in their workspace. And same for the Council for your workspace. And when we all do that, we're very hopeful that we can continue to further reopen the city.

CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Deputy

Commissioner, were you surprised and the Department of Health surprised at the numbers based on all the demonstrations that we had in New York City, at the numbers continue to go down? Is that because people who are demonstrating-- and this is anecdotal, based on what I see on TV. Many are wearing masks. Was that a surprise to you? And the reason I am a scanning is because many of them are going to be the ones that are coming back and phase 2. And, by the way, I made an assumption that two weeks will be on Monday. So, every two weeks, you know, normally, that is how-- and so I don't have any inside information, but just based on what I have seen in other counties. But did you find it strange that the numbers continue to go down?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SCHIFF: So, thank you for that clarification on phase 2. I do want people to-- you know, we want to make sure that New Yorkers know that we are in phase 1 and we do not have a date

for phase 2, so we should continue to follow the phase 1 practices.

CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Right.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SCHIFF: You know, I will have two deferred to my epidemiologist colleagues about whether they are surprised. I can tell you that we are following very closely what is happening in the data so that we can make sure that the risk reduction measures are calibrated to what we are seeing in terms of the health of New Yorkers and the spread of COVID-19. So, again, we can all, you know, work together, continue to practice the core for, and hope to further reopen New York City.

CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much, Commissioner and Deputy Commissioners. Thank you so much for your testimony. Very valuable. I am looking forward to an ongoing dialogue with yourselves and the Majority Leader took, with a good consensus. I think, at the end of the day, we want the same thing. It's just how to usually this where, usually, we struggle with at times. And so, but we all have the best of intentions. And, again, I applaud you all. I know you have been working overtime, seven days a week for the last hundred and

something days. And so, I salute you all, as well as my colleagues who are here presently. And, with that, we will turn it down to the moderator for public testimony.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair Cabrera. Before we go to public testimony, I see Majority Leader Cumbo has her hand up. Majority Leader Cumbo, would you like to ask additional questions?

MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Just one additional question. Have there been thoughts about reworking what we understand as paid sick time or how we are going to be in the trees start phasing looking at sick time? Because, typically, pre-COVID, if I felt sick, I would still come to work and I would still come to work for however many days that I possibly could until-- I am one of those people that I am either at work or I am in the hospital. So, now, it's one of those things where, if you have a sniffle or a cough, you should stay home. And if you are feeling sick or is someone came to work, they tested positive for COVID-19 and those that work in their space would then have to be incubated, has there-- quarantined, rather. Have there been thoughts given

to how we are going to relook at sick time now that we are encouraging people for so much as a sniffle and those sniffles can also translate to their children having a cold or other things, are we looking at how we pay people and paid sick time in all of this?

COMMISSIONER CAMILO: So, at the start of the health emergency, the city released updated time and leave guidance and, for anyone who has tested positive or has some of the symptoms, we have given excuse leave that would not count towards or against a leave balance. So, we have looked at that in order to encourage people that, if they are not feeling well, and to stay home. Because the part of the core four. If you are not feeling well, stay home. Do not come to work. So, there has been, during this time, and acknowledgment and action taken to make sure that we are encouraging people to stay home. And, if you are COVID positive and you need more than two weeks, you get the excuse to leave until you recover. So, I think that is definitely been a move that we have made and specifically to address that point.

MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: And is this moving forward going to be something that people are going to have to get tested for in order to demonstrate that they have had-- That they have COVID-19?

COMMISSIONER CAMILO: It's not a requirement, but you do need medical documentation that you have those symptoms in order to obtain the excused leave, if I'm not mistaken. But, if you do have a positive diagnosis, then that, obviously, would count.

MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Okay. Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We will now turn to the public testimony. I would like to remind everyone that, unlike our typical Council hearings, we will be calling on individuals one by one to testify. Each panelist will be given two minutes to speak. Please begin once the Sergeant has started the timer. Council members who have questions for a particular panelist should use the Zoom raise hand function and I will call on you after the panelist has completed their testimony. For panelists, once your name is called, a member of our staff will unmute you and the Sergeant-at-arms will

set a timer and give you the go-ahead to begin.

Please wait for the Sergeant to announce that you may begin before delivering your testimony. I would now like to call on Joshua Barnett to testify. After Joshua Barnett, I will be calling on Kevin Bolo, and then John Forrester. Joshua Barnett, you may begin upon the Sergeant's announcement.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

JOSHUA BARNETT: Okay. Good afternoon. I'd like to welcome everybody and really thank you. This is a vital issue. I am sending in my testimony. My name is Joshua Barnett. I work for the Housing Authority as an architect. I have been there since 1999. I am also a member of local 375 DC 37 [inaudible there 0:56:45] where I am a shop steward. And, like many of my coworkers around the city, I've been working remotely since the middle of March. We have heard that we are due to go back to the office sometime in June or July, but we have no firm schedule and what concerns myself and a lot of my coworkers is that we not be returned prematurely and that there be a plan in place to make sure that we go back to a safe environment. We know that the curve here is not flattened and we are looking at a second

and third and possibly fourth wave in the future. We have issues with sanitation at our workplace [inaudible 00:57:13] the city even before the pandemic. We have had to file grievances for basic health and safety issues, but now, things like hand sanitizer's, paper towels, hot water, are not just a matter of basic workplace health, it's a matter of life and death. We also, as NYCHA workers, monitor the construction projects of housing developments around the city and we need to know that, as construction professionals, as construction is reinvigorated, that proper safety measures be taken. This is especially vital since we interact with the residents of public housing who have had a very difficult time during the pandemic. Over thousand fatalities so far. In the conditions of public housing, due to years of underfunding and understaffing, have made it even worse. It is very difficult to practice social distancing. We have, at the housing authority, getting back to the union question, the unions have been in constant contact with each other in both the field workers and central office workers share the same concerns about PPE, social distancing, transportation, daycare, that our

offices be deep cleaned. We just moved back to an office with an open office landscape. This is not conducive to health now. We want to know what modifications are going to be made before we go back. And we are also concerned about just our job security in general, as tax revenue goes down. There's been a lot of outsourcing and privatization at the Housing Authority and we don't want to see our numbers go down. The Housing Authority has hired people to maintain the developments from a health point of view during the pandemic, but it has been very unsuccessful with a lot of complaints. We have attached our list--

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time's expired.

JASON BARNETT: Okay. That we sent out to the Housing Authority. So, we support this bill. We need to have an ongoing dialogue and we want to make sure that we are part of the discussion.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Unless there are any questions from the members, we will move to the next panelist. I would now like to welcome Kevin Bogle to testify. After Kevin Bogle, will be calling on John Forrester and then Elizabeth

Eastman. Kevin Bogle, you may begin upon the Sergeant's announcement.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

KEVIN BOGLE: Thank you for the time and opportunity to testify today. My name is Kevin Bogel. I am an assistant landscape architect at New York City Parks Capital Projects. I also serve as the secretary for our chapter of DC 37 local 375 and it is in this capacity I am testifying today on behalf of chapter 7. As a chapter, we wish to share our support of Majority Leader Cumbo proposed law to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of the cities workforce. Our chapter's executive board has been meeting to discuss safety concerns with management of Parks, as well as with OLR in an ongoing manner since late February and early March. We wish to encourage the continued open communication between the newly formed office and with unions and workers. There is not going to be a one-size-fits-all solution for every office, for every worksite, and for every field office in the city and a lot of the rank-and-file workers and union members have been doing work already to shine a light on what needs to change to keep our workers safe. For example, in

Chapter 7, we have three proposals. Teleworking has been working beyond our wildest dreams when we went into it. And this isn't just workers that feel this. We have heard the same from management. For those city workers who are successfully working from home, we hope that we can continue this as long as possible for the safety of ourselves, our families, and our communities. For example, the city of San Francisco has recently decided that city workers will work from home until July 2021. I can submit this letter as evidence as an exhibit, if needed. Second, we would like to propose that city vehicle fleet centralization mandate be postponed until post-COVID. Right now, we have resident engineers sharing vehicles, sometimes in the same day, because of this DCAS proposal to consolidate. And while normally we would support such a thing, at this time, it may result in cross-contamination and COVID exposure. And, finally, for those working on construction sites and field offices or those who cannot work from home, we encourage following scientifically sound methods to ensure temperature checks, [inaudible 01:01:26] PPE, fully sanitized facilities, and hand sanitizer as necessary elements for worker safety. Thank you

for your time and attention and concern for the well-being of civil servants. We appreciate it.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next, we will hear questions from Majority Leader Cumbo. Majority Leader Cumbo, you may begin.

MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Briefly, to both Kevin and Joshua, I think you both for your testimonies. I just wanted to know if the best practices that you are talking about, do you feel that there has been city administration overarching has been giving you guidance and terms of what reopening should look like or do you feel that, within your specific agencies, you all are working in a very insular way to create how you think your agencies should work best and how to move forward? Or do you feel like you are getting guidance and do you feel like there is a space and a place for you to put forward many of the recommendations, other than this hearing, of course, which is fantastic, but do you feel like there is a space for you to say-- and not just a safety's space, but like a receiving place for the ideas that you are discussing? Kevin, you can begin.

KEVIN BOGLE: Thank you, Majority Leader. I would say that my experience in Chapter 7 has been one of gathering information from workers as to what they believe holds in the safety [inaudible 01:03:02] at the moment. Lack of PPE, hand sanitizer, or so on. And then, having regular meetings with management and OLR to kind of relayed those concerns up the chain of command. I have experienced very little kind of citywide communication, either from a Commissioner or mayoral level. It's been very ground-up, and my experience.

MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: I thank you for that because, as you're speaking, it's making me feel like our employees, our staff, those in our office is like what this process should look like should almost come from the ground up in terms of let the agencies and their staff, from maintenance and security to agency had send commissioners, like putting forth to gather like really hearing from people what they think should drive this reopening and how it should look because there are things that I'm going to see that the person who maintains the building is not going to say, and vice versa. So, I thank you for that and I thank you for sharing those ideas. We are

definitely going to document those and share them, as well.

KEVIN BOGLE: Thank you.

MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Joshua?

JOSHUA BARRETT: I would definitely have to second what Kevin just said. That not only haven't we seen anything overarching from the city, but even within the housing authority, which is a very large organization. 12,000 workers. The difference between operations and maintenance, but, even so, you know, again, having the unions and contact with each other, we have been getting different feedback from people in the field, people in the central office, people in different central offices. The housing authority, they've done a great job in terms of helping us work remotely, like you said. You know, IT has been incredible. We have all the software. Things are ongoing. And whether it is your cup of tea or not to work at home, it has been really facilitated. And so, we have been able to deliver services to the residents, but, in terms of having a dialogue or is soliciting input, that we haven't seen. We have reached out to management, but

we haven't really had a lot of response. So, we are still waiting for that to happen.

MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: I know one of the greatest challenges that I hear from my NYCHA residents is services. So, everything from a leaky roof to a bathroom toilet that doesn't flush, where many of those issues able to be addressed during COVID?

JOSHUA BARRETT: That's not specifically what I deal with, but, from what I have heard from our comrades in the teams, for instance, local 237, it is been-- you know, they've had to do a lot of triage and there was a lot, a lot, a lot of difficult to use, as you know, of alleviating the backlog of operations repairs even both for this. And so, this is really--

MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Right.

JOSHUA BARRETT: This has really only made it more difficult and we have really had to do the bare-bones cleaning and repairs. And so, it has, basically, kind of made it worse. From what I hear from them, it's kind of made the worst of a bad situation.

MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Like what Kevin said-- and this is my last question. I'm just so intrigued by this. Has any elements of working at home improved the operations of NYCHA from your vantage point? Has working from home improved services, implementation, response time, ability to get things done in a way that couldn't beforehand?

JOSHUA BARRETT: From my point of view-- I work in the design department with working capital projects.

MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: I see.

JOSHUA BARRETT: So, from what I've seen and from what I have heard also from the operations, we have been able to keep up speed on a lot of things. I haven't heard that it has actually improved anything. Like, when we come up with a capital project, we have to have a dialogue with the stakeholders whose spaces we're going to be renovating. You know, really helps to have a face to face conversation in those situations and that has become more difficult. In terms of the actual repairs that you are talking about, like I said, it is kind of been an uphill battle, from what I am hearing.

MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Well, I've got a few parts I'd love for you to design before we leave out of here.

JOSHUA BARRETT: Anytime.

MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: More discussions later. Thank you, Joshua.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Majority Leader. I would now like to welcome John Forrester to testify. After John Forrester, I will be calling on Elizabeth Eastman. John Forrester, he may begin upon the Sergeant's announcement.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now. Time starts now.

JOHN FORRESTER: Good afternoon, members of the Council and members of the audience. My name is John Forrester. I work with local 375. I am also the co-chair of at the District Council 37 of our climate and justice committee. We, as local 375, representing about 5500 architects, engineers, project managers, that work in almost every single agency in the city, as well as the authority such as the New York City Housing Authority. This has been a very difficult time for a lot of our members. It's a particularly in terms of getting PPE. It often took

weeks and, in some cases, even months to get PPE to the staff, including some of our staff that remained in the field throughout this time period. However, we have worked hard now with various locals in DC 37, with CWA 1180, with OSA, and with other unions, especially at NYCHA, but not only with NYCHA, to develop a series of what we think our short list of protocols that are absolutely essential. These we shared, actually, with Council member Rosenthal when she did her town hall in regards to NYCHA and we are actually sending that very lives to many of you right now and hope that it will be looked at. We are deeply concerned, I think, about the timing on phase 2. It sounds like, to me, if we are talking Monday, that we are really not ready to do that in the situation that has tremendous impact on the health and very lives of our members that would have to go back to work in the offices. We believe that Intro 1950 is actually a really good idea. I think it is essential that we have a centralized place and a review of, at least, the short list protocols and, therefore, I think it would be very helpful. And I also believe that, where we can continue to have our

staff work remotely, they should. I think and to everybody's benefit to do that. Thank you very much.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Unless there are any questions from the members, we will move to the next panelist. I would now like to welcome Elizabeth Eastman to testify. Elizabeth Eastman, you may begin upon the Sergeant's announcement.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

ELIZABETH EASTMAN: Good afternoon. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on this important issue. My name is Elizabeth Eastman. I am a street worker with HPD and a local 375 member. In mid-March, my colleagues and I began to work from home due to the health crisis created by COVID-19. And, today, we are still working from home. As the city reopens, my colleagues and I have heard mixed messages regarding our returned to work. We've heard that there are some [inaudible 01:10:31] in HPD that are scheduled to return to the building within the next weeks and days and weeks. We have also heard that the Agency has already asked some of our employees to return to the office. What we have not heard is anything about a clear, concise plan to

protect the safety of workers in the building. Most of us are familiar with the guidelines from the CDC and, while we are aware that those guidelines have been changing as more is known about COVID-19, what we know is that the office place that we left behind in March is, for the most part, ill-equipped to keep the workers safe from the virus. Some of the concerns that we have are about testing and whether employees will be tested before they returned to work and whether we must be subject to temperature checks upon arrival to the office each morning. We are also concerned about our colleagues who are afraid to return to work. Perhaps they have an underlying condition or a family member who is at risk should they contract the virus. How will these workers be protected? This virus has serious ramifications for a people with a variety of conditions and workers should not be forced to choose between a paycheck and their health and the health of their loved ones. Many of the employees who are working for HPD on 9/11 have found themselves with health conditions caused by exposure to toxins that were in the air in the weeks and months after the towers fell. These workers who I am referring to were not directly

involved in the recovery efforts. These workers got sick simply by coming into lower Manhattan then into their office buildings. These workers came to work and they were told their work environment was safe. Years later, they have found it is not safe and they have paid a steep price with their health due to this misinformation. I am one of those workers. COVID-19 is a new [inaudible 01:12:17] and the city must avoid making the same mistakes with the health of its workers as it did after 9/11. There needs to be a comprehensive plan to address the safety of all city workers and [inaudible 01:12:28] to bring workers back to their jobs safely and that plan must involve the dialogue across all agencies and must take into consideration the guidelines set forth from the CDC. As such, I stand in support of this bill, Intro 1950. This builds a strong step in protecting the workers of the city and I think the City Council for taking action on this important issue. Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next, we will hear questions from Majority Leader Cumbo.

MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: want to thank you, Ms. Eastman for your testimony. Everything that you outlined is really the inspiration for this

legislation. Hearing much of the testimony today, I do not believe that the city is ready to move forward with phase 2. There are so many questions, just like the ones that you outlined in terms of how do we protect our seniors with pre-existing health conditions return back to work? How do we create a healthy work environment where everyone coming into the work environment knows exactly what they need to do? To handle every type of health precaution that they might have? And I think you are exactly right. This is going to take more time. It's important that we not rush it. I would say, you know, that after a 9/11 has happened, as you stated, we are still facing so many health issues that people have faced ever since that particular tragedy happened to the city of New York. And we don't want to rush something because we have seen on so many levels that COVID-19, it's not for many people chose something that clears from your system. That many people in other countries have described that there long capacity never quite returns back to what it was prior back to COVID-19. So, we have to take our workforce very seriously in protecting them and this legislation is a first step, but the more testimony I hear-- and

the more I hear from each of you-- this is one of a gazillion steps that need to be taken in terms of all the proper protocols and precautions to make sure that we don't have a phase 2 of COVID-19. Because of phase 2 would really devastate this city in a way that would be very difficult for us to rebound from. So, thank you so much, Ms. Eastman. Thank you so much for your testimony. And I stand with you in terms of making this even stronger. Thank you.

ELIZABETH EASTMAN: Thank you, Majority Leader Cumbo. Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Majority Leader Cumbo. At this time, if your name has not been called and you wish to testify, please raise your hand using the Zoom raise hand function. Seeing no hands raised, I will now turn it over to Chair Cabrera for closing remarks.

CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much, CJ Murray, for doing a fabulous job in moderating. I want to thank every single one of the staff. You are amazing. Nobody does it better than you. I want to thank every single one of our panelists as they came in and shared. I just want to let you know that we take it to heart and there will be a follow-up. I

want to thank the Commissioners, as well. And I want to thank, in particular, Majority Leader Cumbo for her bill. I know that this is important to her because it is important to our people. Our constituents. We have been through some of the worst of our days and we don't want to repeat. We don't want to have a part two of this. That is my greatest fear. Is a second wave. And we've got to get this right. We've got to do it right and we have to streamline how we are going to coordinate and get to the finish line. So, Majority Leader Combo, thank you. I salute you for always caring and always being so kind about it and courageous. And my colleagues, as well. Thank you for being here today. And, with that and my cell phone, three times--

[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: We closed today's meeting. Thank you so much. God bless.

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 June 27, 2020