

Opposition to Sprinkler Legislation - Intro 1146B

Dear Honorable Council Members,

As your constituent and a residential cooperative shareholder, I am contacting you in regard to Intro. 1146, which would require the installation of automatic sprinkler systems in all residential buildings over 40 feet in the next decade. This bill would negatively impact housing affordability and viability, and quality of life in our city. I ask that you oppose Intro. 1146 given how impractical it is to implement (and impossible to pay for) and instead focus on other ways we can encourage fire safety in New York City.

Intro. 1146 would require residents to either relocate for a period of time or endure significant construction within our units as contractors perform work to install water pipes and sprinkler heads throughout their buildings and apartments. The work could even disturb lead-based paint or asbestos in the walls, which would lead to longer tenant displacement times and endanger our children. Additionally, the requirements for adding sprinklers to many existing buildings raises major building structural integrity concerns. The work would require drilling into walls and ceilings which could impact how our buildings are reinforced.

Beyond concerns of being physically feasible, there are significant questions about costs. The cost to successfully sprinkler a medium-sized building would run into the million dollars. Without government help to cover the expense of installation, labor, the mitigation of health risks posed by asbestos and lead paint, and potential temporary housing for displaced tenants, passage of this bill would put our homes and buildings in financial distress. This is particularly true given the considerable expenses buildings face in complying with Green New York mandates, as well as very expensive elevator modifications that will soon be required. Simply put, the money to pay for all this must come from the pockets of our shareholders, and the size of this financial burden is going to force people from their homes, reduce demand for NYC real estate, and ultimately significantly worsen the financial hardship now being endured by New York City.

All New Yorkers deserve to live in safe and healthy conditions, and we support thoughtful and feasible measures that improve fire safety. However, the City cannot pass legislation that will negatively impact the quality of life and well-being for hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers.

I strongly urge you to oppose Intro 1146B and work to find alternative ways to meet your laudable safety goals without threatening the financial integrity and thus the very existence of our homes as well as New York City itself.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

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