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COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY

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May 12, 2021

Start: 11:05 a.m.

Recess: 11:12 a.m.

HELD AT: REMOTE HEARING (VIRTUAL ROOM 1)

B E F O R E: Robert F. Holden,  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Brad S. Lander  
Eric A. Ulrich  
Paul A. Vallone  
Kalman Yeger

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SERGEANT POLITE: PC recording all set.

SERGEANT HOPE: Cloud rolling.

SERGEANT PEREZ: Backup is rolling.

SERGEANT BIONDO: And good morning everyone and welcome to today's remote New York City Council Hearing for the Committee on Technology. At this time, would all panelists please turn on their videos for verification purposes?

To minimize disruptions, please place all electronic devices to vibrate or silent mode. Thank you for your cooperation. Chair Holden, we are ready to begin.

CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Thank you Sergeant. Good morning everyone. I am Council Member Robert Holden, Chair Of the Council's Committee on Technology. We are here to hold a vote on a bill related to an assessment of 311 services request intake map.

The 311 system in New York City is a vital institution that serves an essential piece of the communications between New Yorkers and our government. 311 is not just the largest system in the nation, it is also one of the primary ways residents communicate their needs to the city.

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2           Consequently, it is a key source of information  
3 on issues within New York City. 311 is meant to be  
4 widely assessable in New York City and can be  
5 accessed via phone, mobile app or website 24/7.

6 Looking at the New York City 311 Open Data page, more  
7 than 2.7 million service requests were received over  
8 the past 12 months. And more than half of those  
9 requests coming from the New York City 311 mobile app  
10 and website in that time.

11           Given the prevalence of 311 service requests from  
12 the mobile app and the website, it is important that  
13 these platforms work correctly. To this end, the New  
14 York City's Department of Information Technology and  
15 Telecommunications, also known as DoITT, entered a  
16 \$24 million contract with IBM to upgrade the NYC 311  
17 system.

18           However, problems with the New York City's 311  
19 platform persists. On a particular note, are the map  
20 and location capabilities utilized on the mobile app  
21 and the website. Despite reported upgrades to the  
22 New York City 311 system, many New Yorkers still find  
23 difficulty when trying to accurately portray the  
24 locations of their service requests through the  
25 mobile app and website. And I have a lot of problem

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2 many times with that because it doesn't give - you  
3 may not be in front of an address. The ability to  
4 accurately pin the location of a service request is  
5 crucial for 311. As it allows the city to improve  
6 service delivery and understand service requests with  
7 more certainty.

8 My Bill, it's Intro. Number 1755-A, would require  
9 DoITT to conduct an assessment of the Interactive Map  
10 accessible through 311 website or mobile device  
11 application and used for the intake of 311 service  
12 requests and complaints to determine the feasibility  
13 of improving a location accuracy of the 311 Intake  
14 Map. The department would also be required to submit  
15 a report of the results of the assessment to the  
16 Council.

17 On a personal note, I have spent the better part  
18 of 40 years as a Civic President, Community Board  
19 Member, Community Activist and you know, getting the  
20 city to respond to the needs of its residents. Apart  
21 from calling a Council Members office, 311 is the  
22 most direct way New Yorkers can interact with city  
23 government and get results.

24 Tropical Storm Isaias revealed many shortcomings  
25 in the 311 system, especially when reporting downed

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2 trees. And even before the storm, there were areas  
3 of the city with no nearby addresses which posed  
4 challenges of reporting issues to 311.

5 Technology should be leveraged to address  
6 governments shortcomings and we must embrace  
7 modernization whenever possible.

8 While I thank DoITT Commissioner Jessica Tisch  
9 for her work on improving the 311 system, I believe  
10 that my Bill Intro. 1755 will make it even better.  
11 So, I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this  
12 bill.

13 I am joined by Council Member Ulrich, Council  
14 Member Vallone, Council Member Yeger and Council  
15 Member Lander. I would like to thank our excellent  
16 Technology Committee staff Counsel Irene Byhovsky,  
17 Policy Analyst Charles Kim, Finance Analyst  
18 Florentine Kabore for their excellent work on this  
19 hearing.

20 Also, Michelle Lee from the City Council Bill  
21 Drafting Division for her work in drafting this piece  
22 of legislation. And finally, my staff Chief of Staff  
23 Daniel Kurzyna, Communications Director Kevin Ryan  
24 and Legislative Director Craig Caruana.

25 I will now ask the Clerk to call the roll.

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2 COMMITTEE CLERK: Good morning, William Martin  
3 Committee Clerk roll call vote Committee on  
4 Technology, Proposed Introduction 1755-A. Chair  
5 Holden?

6 CHAIR HOLDEN: Aye.

7 COMMITTEE CLERK: Lander?

8 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: I vote aye.

9 COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank you. Vallone?

10 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Aye.

11 COMMITTEE CLERK: Yeger?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: Aye.

13 COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank you. One moment. By a  
14 vote of four in the affirmative, zero in the negative  
15 and no abstentions, Introduction has been adopted by  
16 the Committee. And Mr. Chair, I believe we are  
17 waiting for one more member.

18 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Okay, can we leave the vote  
19 open for 10-15 minutes? Is that alright?

20 COMMITTEE CLERK: Absolutely.

21 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Okay, thank you everyone.

22 [BRIEF PAUSE 6:07-06:31].

23 UNIDENTIFIED: Billy, can you call Council Member  
24 Ulrich?

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COMMITTEE CLERK: Good morning Council Member Ulrich.

COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: Hi, good morning.

COMMITTEE CLERK: The roll call vote Committee on Technology Proposed Introduction 1755-A?

COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: I vote aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank you sir. Final vote is now five in the affirmative, zero in the negative and no abstentions, thank you. Mr. Chair, that is a full committee.

CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Thank you. This hearing is adjourned. [GAVEL]

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 7, 2021