

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON CONTRACTS

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SEPTEMBER 23, 2021  
Start: 12:10 P.M.  
Recess: 12:17 P.M.

HELD AT: COMMITTEE ROOM - CITY HALL

B E F O R E: CHAIR BEN KALLOS

COUNCIL MEMBERS: BEN KALLOS  
HELEN ROSENTHAL  
MARK GJONAJ  
JAMES GENNARO

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

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3 CHAIR BEN KALLOS: Good morning and  
4 welcome to this vote of the New York City Council's  
5 Committee on Contracts. I'm Council Member Ben  
6 Kallos and I am chair of the committee. Today, we'll  
7 be voting to two Bill that I authored earlier this  
8 year. The first Bill is Introduction 2271-A. It's  
9 in relation to environmentally preferable purchasing  
10 by city agencies while the second Introduction 2272-A  
11 is in relation to agency purchasing of the textiles.  
12 Both Bills aim to use the city's immense purchasing  
13 power, \$18 billion dollars to support the ambitious  
14 environmental goals being pursued by this council,  
15 and which are vital if we're going to have any chance  
16 of slowing down climate change. The timing of  
17 today's vote is during climate week. It could not be  
18 more pertinent. As we are all aware, the impacts of  
19 the climate change are squarely upon us as across the  
20 five boroughs. We can expect to experience more  
21 frequent and more extremes hurricanes, heat waves,  
22 storms, and flooding. Unfortunately, the storms and  
23 flooding we witnessed this past summer showed us how  
24 deadly our weather conditions can become, and we  
25 clearly need to be more proactive with mitigating

2 negative effects of climate change. In 2005, when  
3 the city's environment preferable purchasing laws  
4 were first enacted, this was the aim, as a multi-  
5 billion purchaser of goods and services, it was  
6 recognized that the city was uniquely positioned to  
7 use that money on products that ultimately supported  
8 the city's goal of mitigating climate change. Sadly,  
9 however, this collection of laws has not been amended  
10 since 2011. The standards haven't been updated since  
11 2012, and still today have guidelines on purchasing  
12 cassette tapes and mini discs. Talk about outdated.  
13 In the decade or so since this last update, in  
14 addition to changes in how we consume our music, the  
15 research on climate change (inaudible) ways to  
16 moderate the negative effects have changed  
17 drastically, so jokes aside, it is vital that our  
18 laws keep pace. The existing standards were also  
19 supposed to be reviewed every two years and changed  
20 to keep up with new innovations and sustainable  
21 products. The current administration, by their own  
22 admission, said that they did not feel as if there  
23 was any need to get rid of the cassette tapes, mini  
24 discs, VHS tapes, or compact fluorescent lights which  
25 I just haven't even seen in the store in years, and

2 other products of a generation that are still somehow  
3 preferred over existing sustainable environmental  
4 friendly products. This is the main aim of  
5 Introduction 2271-A in addition to making important  
6 updates of this city's purchase of lightbulbs,  
7 electronic products, clean cleaning supplies and  
8 furniture, it also mandates additional reporting by  
9 the director of the city-wide environmental  
10 purchasing. The goal of these changes is to improve  
11 public oversight of the environmental preferable  
12 purchasing process so that updates can be tracked and  
13 improved. Importantly, the Bill also updates the  
14 language to more clearly reflect a newly established  
15 innovations within the green economy. For instance,  
16 instead of simply reducing waste or relying on  
17 recycling, the Bill makes it clear the city can now  
18 use its purchasing power to pursue the end goal of  
19 zero waste and net-zero greenhouse gas emissions.  
20 The second Bill we are voting on today, Introduction  
21 2272-A applies these aspirations to the city's  
22 procurement of textile products. Textiles are some  
23 of the most reusable items in the way stream, and  
24 yet, they continue to be sent to landfills. Fashion  
25 and garment companies across the world including H&M,

2 Stella McCartney, and Burberry are committed to  
3 moving the industry towards (inaudible) rather than  
4 be by taking responsibility for their products after  
5 customers have finished using them, or by only using  
6 materials that can be fully broken down and  
7 remanufactured into new items. As a key player in  
8 the international garment industry, New York City is  
9 uniquely positioned to lead this important  
10 environmental change; that is why I support the  
11 procurement of more environmentally sustainable  
12 textiles by city agencies. We know that Decast (SP?)  
13 makes purchases for things like uniforms and  
14 blankets, but we also have a large police and fire  
15 department that utilize textiles. As a global  
16 fashion capital, New York City also have key industry  
17 players with expertise on how the global textile  
18 supply chain operates and environmental changes being  
19 implemented. I believe that these experts, along  
20 with representatives from city agencies are best  
21 positioned to guide a new set of procurement  
22 standards for the city's purchase of textile  
23 products. Introduction 2272-A would therefore first  
24 require the Director of City-Wide Environmental  
25 Purchasing to report on the city's purchase of

2 textile goods. The task force established by this  
3 Bill would then be asked to make recommendations on  
4 the environment preferable purchasing use, and  
5 disposal of textiles by city agencies, but the  
6 updates to the environmental preferable purchasing  
7 and potential to improve the city's purchase of  
8 textile products, I hope that we can fully capitalize  
9 on the city's purchasing power as an \$18 billion  
10 rehemith of a consumer, the city has a huge impact on  
11 the market. The purchases we make and the standards  
12 we set act as incentives that can help drive  
13 innovation. Before I call a vote, I'd like to take a  
14 moment to thank the staff who spent the past two  
15 years working on these Bill. On the Contract's  
16 Committee, I want to thank legislative counsel, Alex  
17 Paulenoff; Policy Analysis, Leah Scupiac (SP?);  
18 Finance Analysis, Frank Sarno; and Finance Unit Head,  
19 John Russell (SP?). I'd also like to extend my  
20 thanks to the staff of the Bill drafting division,  
21 Deputy Director, Wes Jones (SP?); the Assistant  
22 Deputy Director Malocnes Serdeen (SP?), Senior  
23 Counsel, Nick Connell (SP?), and Counsel Jessica  
24 Steinberg-Alben (SP?). As we head into the last few  
25 days of parament week, with the consequences of the

1 COMMITTEE ON CONTRACTS

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2 climate change clearly on our minds, I'd like to  
3 encourage my fellow members to vote in favor of these  
4 Bills, and I think that is not going to be a question  
5 with our former chair of this committee, Helen  
6 Rosenthal, and the current chair of the Environmental  
7 Protection Committee, Jim Gennaro. It felt kind of  
8 strange reading about all the environmental stuff to  
9 a legend in his own right. I now as the clerk to  
10 call the roll.

11 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: William  
12 Martin, Committee Clerk, roll call vote, Committee on  
13 Contracts, both items are coupled. Chair Kallos.

14 CHAIR BEN KALLOS: I.

15 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN:  
16 Rosenthal.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER HELEN ROSENTHAL: I vote I  
18 with congratulations to the chair.

19 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Gjonaj.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER MARK GJONAJ: I.

21 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Gennaro.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES GENNARO: Mr. Chair,  
23 I ask for the opportunity to speak on my vote.

24 CHAIR BEN KALLOS: Granted.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES GENNARO: This is  
3 wonderful environmental leadership. I really  
4 appreciate the hard work. I mean, back in my  
5 previous incarnation, I did some of these purchasing  
6 Bills, and I know what it's like to work through the  
7 details, and to get it right. I read through it  
8 thoroughly. You did a great job. I salute you for  
9 your great environmental leadership, and certainly  
10 salute the staff. I thank people for voting yes.  
11 I'm proudly adding my name to co-sponsor to both of  
12 these Bills, and with that, I vote I.

13 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: By a  
14 vote of four in the affirmative, zero in the  
15 negative, and no abstentions, both items have been  
16 adopted by the committee.

17 CHAIR BEN KALLOS: I hereby adjourn this  
18 meeting.

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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 October 17, 2021