



Legislation Text

File #: Res 1496-2000, Version: *

Res. No. 1496

Resolution calling upon the Department of Health to test rat carcasses for leptospirosis and other rat-borne diseases in order to identify areas which may be at risk for the spread of these diseases.

By Council Members Perkins, Robles, Carrion, Malave-Dilan, Eisland, Freed, Henry, Lopez, Marshall, Michels, Nelson, Quinn, Fiala and Stabile; also Council Members Harrison, Koslowitz, Leffler, Robinson, Sabini, Spigner and Wooten

Whereas, There is an enormous rat population throughout the City of New York; and
 Whereas, Rats carry a number of diseases, including arenaviruses and leptospirosis, are hosts to a number of disease-carrying parasites, such as ticks, and aggravate preexisting health conditions, such as asthma, and therefore pose a threat to the public health; and
 Whereas, Rat-borne arenaviruses were recently linked to three deaths in Southern California in the past year; and
 Whereas, Rats are the leading cause of leptospirosis infection in humans; and
 Whereas, According to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, if not treated, leptospirosis can lead to meningitis, kidney damage, liver failure, respiratory disease, and even death; and
 Whereas, Because the symptoms of leptospirosis mimic the flu, failure to diagnose the illness is common; and
 Whereas, Notwithstanding widespread failure to diagnose the illness, data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicate that over the past decade, hundreds of cases of leptospirosis have been positively identified in the United States; and
 Whereas, In November 1996, the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases specifically identified inner-city residents as a population at risk for leptospirosis, given the increased rat populations (gauged by rat complaints per year) found in large cities, such as New York City; and
 Whereas, Human infection by leptospirosis and other rat-borne diseases, can be prevented or reduced by effective rat control efforts, as well as disinfection in areas known to be highly populated by infected rats; now, therefore, be it
 Resolved, That the Department of Health test rat carcasses for leptospirosis and other rat-borne diseases in order to identify areas which may be at risk for the spread of these diseases.

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08/10/00

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