



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 13

Resolution calling upon the state legislature to pass and Governor to sign Senate bill S. 4921 and Assembly bill A. 6863 that relate to the protection of public health from radon in natural gas.

By Council Members Levin, Chin, Levine, Palma, Johnson, Mendez and Rosenthal

Whereas, Radon is a colorless and odorless naturally occurring radioactive gas, the long-term exposure to which is known to cause lung cancer in humans; and

Whereas, Hydraulic fracturing is a method of extracting natural gas from deep shale formations such as the Marcellus Shale, which underlies a vast section of New York and some surrounding states; and

Whereas, According to the United States Geological Survey, shale formations can be associated with relatively high levels of naturally occurring radioactive material; and

Whereas, When natural gas is extracted from shale formations via hydraulic fracturing, radon gas can be intermixed with the natural gas; and

Whereas, Radon has a half-life of 3.8 days, decaying through a series of steps during which alpha radiation is released; and

Whereas, Historically, natural gas coming to New York City has travelled from distant locations such as the Gulf Coast, allowing additional time for any radon in the gas to decay prior to entering homes; and

Whereas, With increasing amounts of hydraulic fracturing occurring in the Northeastern United States, potentially including in New York State, the natural gas, and any radon it contains, may travel shorter distances to get to New York City, which would allow less time for the radon to decay; and

Whereas, Radon, if present in natural gas, could enter homes via stoves that burn such natural gas; and

Whereas, If radon did enter homes in sufficiently high amounts, and if it didn't disperse through

ventilation or other means, it could accumulate and expose people to health risks; and

Whereas, Radon levels in natural gas can be monitored in natural gas pipes prior to distribution to homes; and

Whereas, Senate bill S. 4921, sponsored by Senator Dianne Savino (D-NYC), and Assembly bill A. 6863, sponsored by Assembly Member Linda Rosenthal (D-NYC), require local distribution entities to undertake continuous monitoring of natural gas for radon, disclose monitoring results to the public, take mitigation measures if radon or radon progeny levels crossed any of several different thresholds in order to reduce those levels to below such thresholds; and

Whereas, Such actions would be sufficient to protect the public health from any potential impacts from radon in natural gas; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the state legislature to pass and Governor to sign Senate bill S. 4921 and Assembly bill A. 6863 that relate to the protection of public health from radon in natural gas.

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