



Legislation Details (With Text)

File #: Res 2134-2001 **Version:** * **Name:** Declare conditions of the WTC disaster a public health emergency.

Type: Resolution **Status:** Filed

In control: Committee on Health

On agenda: 12/11/2001

Enactment date: **Enactment #:**

Title: Resolution calling upon the Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services to declare the conditions caused by the World Trade Center disaster a public health emergency.

Sponsors: Kathryn E. Freed, Adolfo Carrion, Una Clarke, Martin Malave-Dilan, Guillermo Linares, Stanley E. Michels, Christine C. Quinn, John D. Sabini, Wendell Foster

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Attachments:

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
12/11/2001	*	City Council	Introduced by Council	
12/11/2001	*	City Council	Referred to Comm by Council	
12/31/2001	*	City Council	Filed (End of Session)	

Res. No 2134

Resolution calling upon the Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services to declare the conditions caused by the World Trade Center disaster a public health emergency.

By Council Members Freed, Carrion, Clarke, Malave-Dilan, Linares, Michels, Quinn and Sabini; also Council Member Foster

Whereas, The September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center caused the widespread devastation of Lower Manhattan; and

Whereas, The collapse and continuous burning of the World Trade Center have caused numerous toxins to be released into the air, calling into question the air quality in Lower Manhattan; and

Whereas, The around-the-clock clean-up of the World Trade Center site has caused dust and other particulate matter to be continually released into the air, creating a near-constant hazard to both residents and persons working in and around the site; and

Whereas, Toxins and particulate matter such as benzene, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), lead, chlorinated dioxins, chromium, fiberglass and asbestos have been detected in sometimes hazardous amounts in the air surrounding the World Trade Center site; and

Whereas, Exposure to such materials has been known to cause short-term health problems, such as respiratory ailments, as well as long-term health problems, such as liver and kidney disease, leukemia and varied cancers; and

Whereas, The extent to which exposure to discrete chemicals and particulate matter emitted by the World Trade Center site, or a combination of such materials, may cause long-term health impacts is unknown; and

Whereas, Mayor Giuliani and others have estimated that the World Trade Center clean-up effort will continue well into 2002; and

Whereas, This clean-up effort will cause chemicals and particulate matter to be emitted into the air for an indeterminate period or time; and

Whereas, Individual owners and occupants of buildings in the area surrounding the World Trade Center site have had to clean such buildings on their own, sometimes without adequate information from the City as to how to properly proceed, calling into question their ability to effectively rid harmful matter from such buildings, as well as the health impact of the cleaning on residents, workers and passersby; and

Whereas, Such cleaning is more properly done by a single agency, rather than on a building-by-building basis, where owners and occupants of such buildings may lack the knowledge to properly clean their premises, given the dangerous nature of the particulate matter; and

Whereas, Pursuant to federal law, the Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) may determine that a public health emergency exists within the United States; and

Whereas, Pursuant to federal law, the Secretary of HHS is authorized to develop and implement a plan that dispatches the resources available to HHS and other agencies under his or her jurisdiction (including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) to meet health emergencies; and

Whereas, The conditions caused in Lower Manhattan by the World Trade Center disaster should be declared a public health emergency by the Secretary of HHS and receive resources concomitant with such a designation; and

Whereas, Such resources should include funds to aid owners and occupants of buildings surrounding the World Trade Center site to properly and thoroughly clean their buildings (including facades and rooftops) from the fallout of the World Trade Center fallout; now, therefore, be it Resolved, that the New York City Council calls upon the Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services to declare the conditions caused by the World Trade Center disaster a public health emergency.

JM

LS# 4665
12/05/01
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