Legislation Details (With Text)

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Title: Resolution calling upon the appropriate Committee of the Council of the City of New York to hold a hearing on racial disparities and environmental health.

Sponsors:

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5/11/2005	*	City Council	Introduced by Council	
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12/31/2005	*	City Council	Filed (End of Session)	

Res. No. 952

Resolution calling upon the appropriate Committee of the Council of the City of New York to hold a hearing on racial disparities and environmental health.

By Council Members Martinez, Barron, Boyland, Clarke, Comrie, Fidler, Foster, Gonzalez, James, Palma, Sanders Jr., Sears and Stewart

Whereas, According to the World Health Organization (WHO), environmental health comprises those aspects of human health, including quality of life, that are determined by physical, chemical, biological, social and psychosocial factors; and

Whereas, Furthermore, the WHO supports the theory and practice of assessing, correcting, controlling and preventing those factors in the environment that can potentially affect adversely the health of present and future generations; and

Whereas, According to the Columbia Center for the Health of Urban Minorities, a person's ability to increase healthy behaviors, improve health and prevent disease is influenced by such person's environment; and

Whereas, Numerous recent studies have shown links between environmental pollution, particularly air

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pollution, and increased risk of various diseases; and

Whereas, An article in Heart Disease Weekly reported that elevated exposure to air pollution, and especially particulate matter, thickens the blood and boosts inflammation, which in turn can increase risk of heart attacks, stroke and worsening respiratory problems; and

Whereas, According to the National Children's Study, sponsored and authorized by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, pollutants increase allergies and asthma amongst children; and

Whereas, According to the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), residents of Washington Heights and Inwood are 10 percent more likely to get cancer, 5 percent more likely to have a stroke and 45 percent more likely to have kidney disease compared to the rest of the City; and

Whereas, According to DOHMH, in certain City neighborhoods, including Central Harlem, East Harlem, Morrisania, Highbridge, Central Brooklyn, Bushwick and Williamsburg, children are approximately twice as likely to have asthma as children in other parts of the City; and

Whereas, Such neighborhoods are "minority majority" neighborhoods, which is defined by the U.S. Congress as a district with a majority of residents who are part of an ethnic minority; and

Whereas, A recent study by the Columbia Center for Children's Environmental Health of mothers and their newborns in Northern Manhattan and the South Bronx found that prenatal exposure to combustion-related urban air pollutants alters the structure of chromosomes of babies in the womb and can lead to an increased risk of cancer later in life; and

Whereas, West Harlem Environmental Action (WE ACT) filed a Title VI complaint with the U.S. Department of Transportation in 2000, charging the Metropolitan Transit Authority with violating the civil rights of Northern Manhattan's mostly black and Latino residents due to the fact that such agency located a disproportionate number of Manhattan's diesel bus depots (six of eight) in Northern Manhattan; and

Whereas, According to New York Lawyers for the Public Interest, the Southwest Bronx houses eighteen waste transfer stations and other waste facilities, a New York City Department of Environmental Protection sewage treatment plant processing all of the Bronx's sewage (some of which is discharged into local waters) and the New York Organic Fertilizer Company, which processes at least half of New York City's "treated sludge"; and

Whereas, The Environmental Protection Agency has classified Brooklyn as one of ten counties in the state with "severe non-attainment" of legal levels of ozone, the main component of smog; and

Whereas, Studies, most notably by the United States General Accounting Office, have found that commercial hazardous waste facilities were more likely to be found near minority communities; and

Whereas, Government has a continuing responsibility to reduce health disparities; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the appropriate Committee of the Council of the City of New York hold a hearing on racial disparities and environmental health.

DP
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5/6/05

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