



Legislation Details (With Text)

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Title: Resolution calling on the States of New York and New Jersey to enact legislation that dissolves the Waterfront Commission of New York Harbor and calling on the United States Congress to grant its consent.

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Res. No. 2222

Resolution calling on the States of New York and New Jersey to enact legislation that dissolves the Waterfront Commission of New York Harbor and calling on the United States Congress to grant its consent.

By Council Member Weprin

Whereas, Because of the massive corruption in the 1950s that plagued the waterfront of the New York Harbor, the States of New York and New Jersey enacted a compact called the Waterfront Commission Act that formed a bi-state entity to solve this problem; and

Whereas, With the mandate to “investigate, deter, combat, and remedy criminal activity and influence in the Port of New York and New Jersey and to ensure fair hiring and employment practices, so that the Port region can grow and prosper,” the bi-state compact was approved by the United States Congress in 1953; and

Whereas, The commission is made up of two commissioners each of whom is appointed by the governors of both states and who serve terms of three years, an Executive Director who oversees the day-to-day

operations, and a staff of almost 100 people; and

Whereas, Funded primarily through an assessment on the salaries paid to the workers on the pier, the Waterfront Commission has an annual budget of more than \$11 million; and

Whereas, The duties of the Commission include regulating and licensing all stevedoring companies and individuals that operate on the harbor, regulating the employment of longshoremen, conducting compliance and payroll audits, and investigating crimes that occur within the 1500 square mile port district; and

Whereas, Due to complaints of abuse from an employee of the Commission, former-Governor Eliot Spitzer and Governor David A. Paterson issued several executive orders, beginning in 2007, that directed the New York State Inspector General to investigate the Commission; and

Whereas, After a thorough review, the Inspector General released a report in August 2009 that found the mismanagement and abuses of influence throughout the agency produced an organization fraught with corruption; and

Whereas, The Inspector General specifically found that the Commission failed to issue a permanent license to companies during the prior ten years, resulting in a lack of completed audits and salary assessments which ultimately affected the Commission's budget; and

Whereas, The investigation also revealed inconsistent enforcement of violations, numerous conflict of interest issues involving several Commission officials, the hiring of unqualified candidates in the Police Division, and improper uses of vehicles and police parking placards, among others; and

Whereas, Although the State Governors and officials in the Waterfront Commission are now trying to reorganize the organization, the public should not have to continue to support an agency mired in such corruption and gross misuse of resources; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls on the States of New York and New Jersey to enact legislation that dissolves the Waterfront Commission of New York Harbor and calls on the United States Congress to grant its consent.

CFP
LS 7752/2009