



Legislation Text

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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.

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