



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 1084

Resolution calling upon the New York City Housing Authority to devise Disaster Evacuation Plans for residents in Public Housing.

By Council Members James, Brewer, Gerson, Gonzalez, Jackson, Koppell, Nelson, Reyna, Sanders Jr., White Jr. and Oddo

Whereas, The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) is the largest public housing agency in the country; and

Whereas, NYCHA has 343 developments containing 2,653 buildings spread throughout the City; and

Whereas, NYCHA provides affordable housing for approximately 409,000 official tenants residing in approximately 180,000 apartments; and

Whereas, Based upon the 2000 Census, NYCHA's public housing represents 8.4% of the City's rental apartments and is home to 5.1% of the City's population; and

Whereas, According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), anticipation of a disaster is of the utmost importance in protecting both people and property from the potentially devastating effects of such disaster; and

Whereas, According to The Earth Institute at Columbia University, which has compiled data relating to Hurricane Katrina, as of October 2007, at least 1,295 people died and 595 people remain missing as a result of the hurricane, which struck the Gulf Coast in August 2005;

Whereas, The total cost of the damage from Katrina, as estimated by the National Hurricane Center, is \$81.2 billion, thereby making it the costliest natural disaster in America's history; and

Whereas, According to the United States Department of Transportation's report to Congress entitled,

“Catastrophic Hurricane Evacuation Plan Evaluation,” it was found that the Hurricane Katrina evacuation plan did not adequately account for the special needs of low-income populations; and

Whereas, NYCHA has the ability to control how it prepares for disasters; and

Whereas, A thorough and intelligently designed Disaster Evacuation Plan has in it the potential to save countless lives and avoid massive financial losses; and

Whereas, Such a plan should address the unique challenges of evacuating and/or delivering emergency services to people with special needs, as well as the differences among the various NYCHA developments; and

Whereas, Such a plan should also address matters including but not limited to a transportation strategy for those without private vehicles or funds for alternative private travel, a temporary relocation strategy for those who cannot afford hotels or who do not have nearby relatives or friends with whom they can stay, adequate stockpiles of food, water, and medicine accessible to low income and special needs communities, or plans for immediate delivery, emergency professionals who have the training and equipment required to assist people with special needs, and a strategy for adequate communication for those without sufficient English or writing ability, or for the visually and hearing impaired; and

Whereas, NYCHA has both the resources and the knowledge to best understand the unique needs of the people who live in its public housing apartments, now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York City Housing Authority to devise Disaster Evacuation Plans for residents in Public Housing.