



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 2092

Resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to approve, legislation creating a Mitchell-Lama-type program for the 21st Century for buildings to be built on vacant lots owned by the City of New York and for vacant City-owned buildings.

By Council Members Mark-Viverito, Brewer, Fidler, Gonzalez, James, Palma, Reyna, Sanders Jr., Sears, Avella and Comrie

Whereas, There is currently a severe shortage of affordable housing in the City of New York; and

Whereas, According to the 2008 New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey (HVS), the Citywide vacancy rate for rental apartments was only 2.88 percent; and

Whereas, The low vacancy rate is an indication of the City's affordable housing crisis; and

Whereas, The City has seen recent losses in affordable housing due to withdrawals from the Mitchell-Lama and project-based Section 8 programs, and the deregulation of rent-regulated housing; and

Whereas, Funding for the construction of new affordable housing has not kept pace with New York City's needs; and

Whereas, Affordable housing programs keep neighborhoods economically diverse and vibrant by allowing low to middle-income New Yorkers to remain residents of the City; and

Whereas, Housing associations are comprised of the owners of affordable housing developments organized pursuant to the Private Housing Finance Law and help sustain affordable housing; and

Whereas, Housing associations help improve the quality of life for tenants by serving as a collective voice for such tenants with respect to matters concerning building operations and maintenance; and

Whereas, A recent survey by the President of the Borough of Manhattan, Scott Stringer, found that some of the vacant lots and buildings in Manhattan were owned by the City of New York; and

Whereas, The New York State Legislature (the Legislature), through the creation of affordable housing programs such as the Mitchell-Lama program and other programs established in the Private Housing Finance Law, attempted to remedy a serious shortage of decent housing by providing affordable rental units for individuals and families whose incomes were too high for public housing, but not high enough to afford housing developed through private enterprise; and

Whereas, Currently, owners of Mitchell-Lama buildings are permitted to buy out their mortgages and take their buildings out of this program after 20 years, and there are thousands of apartments in buildings where property owners currently have this option; and

Whereas, Some neighborhoods in the City have seen rapid gentrification in recent years in areas where vacant lots and buildings exist; and

Whereas, Rapid gentrification may have resulted in the displacement of low and middle-income New Yorkers, severely disrupting the life of the communities where such individuals have lived; and

Whereas, Since rapid gentrification may have contributed to the displacement of some New Yorkers, and some New Yorkers residing in a Mitchell-Lama building may be adversely affected by such opt-outs, the Legislature should create a new Mitchell-Lama program for the 21st Century analogous to the existing program, which would encourage development on vacant City-owned lots and by converting vacant City-owned buildings into residences; and

Whereas, At a time when the City is hemorrhaging affordable housing, New York State should help this housing crisis end, and ensure that it is not exacerbated by allowing vacant City-owned buildings and lots to remain vacant without providing a mechanism to turn them into affordable housing; and

Whereas, State legislation to create a new Mitchell-Lama-type program for the 21st Century for buildings to be built on vacant lots owned by the City and for vacant City-owned buildings, with a requirement that some of the units created be reserved for neighborhood residents who have been previously displaced, would make it easier for the City to survive this affordable housing crisis and help keep neighborhoods

economically diverse and vibrant; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to approve, legislation creating a Mitchell-Lama- type program for the 21st Century for buildings to be built on vacant lots owned by the City of New York and for vacant City-owned buildings.

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BJG
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