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THE COUNCIL OF
THE CITY OF NEW YORK
MARGARET S. CHIN
COUNCIL MEMBER, 1ST DISTRICT, MANHATTAN

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AGING

December 6, 2012

Mr. Joseph Martens
Commissioner
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12223

Dear Commissioner Martens:

I am writing concerning the ongoing presence of generators in many parts of my district, lower Manhattan, and especially, in the Financial District.

I have received dozens of complaints from residential and commercial buildings about fumes and exhaust emanating from diesel-powered generators in the areas around Beaver, Water, Pearl, and Whitehall Streets, to name a few. I am very concerned over reports of fumes from generators entering residential, and commercial, units, especially since many of these generators are likely to be running for up to six months at some locations.

After 9/11, many residents were concerned about air quality, but were assured by government that the air was safe to breathe. Sadly, this turned out not to be the case. Now, after Hurricane Sandy, we are hearing the same questions, and I hope that the DEC will take steps this time to proactively address air pollution from generators and remediation trucks as well as concerns about mold and fuel spillage fumes.

We cannot leave it to private entities involved with cleanup to assure residents that the air is safe to breathe. It is essential that the Department of Environmental Conservation conduct air quality monitoring in the Financial District, especially around residential buildings with high concentrations of diesel-powered generators. The results of these tests should be made available to the public by coordinating with an agency like the Lower Manhattan Construction Command.

It is unfair to keep Financial District residents and workers in the dark about the potential toxins they are breathing in as a result of these generators. While I realize that that these generators are necessary to keep buildings open in the aftermath of hurricane Sandy; I see no reason why comprehensive air quality monitoring should not be in place.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly at (212) 788-7259.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Margaret S. Chin". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a large initial 'M' and a long, sweeping underline.

Margaret S. Chin
New York City Council Member
District -1, Manhattan

Cc:

Commissioner Carter Strickland, Department of Environmental Protection