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**Council member Margaret Chin introduces bill in regards to purchase of trademark counterfeit goods**

New York, NY – At today’s Stated Meeting, Council member Chin introduced a bill to amend the administrative code of the City of New York in relation to the purchase of counterfeit goods.

Intro 544, which was referred to the Committee on Public Safety for a hearing and potential amendment, will deem “the purchase of trademark counterfeit goods a Class A misdemeanor punishable by a term of imprisonment not to exceed one year and a fine not to exceed one thousand dollars, or a civil penalty not to exceed one thousand dollars for each violation, or both.” Each object or good purchased shall be considered a separate violation.

The bill will apply to trademark counterfeit goods only. A “counterfeit trademark” is a false trademark or an imitation of a trademark that is used to identify goods that are identical to or substantially indistinguishable from the authorized trademarked good.

Council member Chin said of the bill, “I want the risk of getting fined to serve as a deterrent to those who would otherwise buy counterfeit goods. The counterfeit goods trade costs our city much needed tax revenue, takes away from local businesses, and has a ruinous effect on the quality of life in our neighborhoods. Tackling the suppliers are not enough. This is a profitable industry – an estimated \$23 billion is spent on counterfeit goods in NYC each year. For each storehouse that is shut down, there are others waiting to take its place. It is time to get serious about this criminal activity and its local and global repercussions.”

This bill is a new approach to countering the sale of counterfeit goods – which is already illegal and carries charges ranging from misdemeanor to felony – but nonetheless is increasingly prevalent in New York City, and especially in lower Manhattan. This bill does not criminalize the purchase of inexpensive merchandise that does not infringe on registered trademarks, which are legal and sold openly.

The vast majority of trademark counterfeit goods for sale in New York City are sold surreptitiously because it is illegal to do so. Observed methods of sale range from selling counterfeit goods in back rooms of shops, in alleyways, out of the back of vehicles, and out of suitcases and opaque satchels. As such, the bill provides that counterfeit goods can be identified based on quality, price and/or the condition of seller or sale location.

Intro 544 will give police the tools they need to issue a summons to individuals caught purchasing trademark counterfeit goods, for example, during raids on stores who sell counterfeit merchandise or when observing an illegal sale.