



THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

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PRESERVING ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING, COUNCIL VOTES TO PROTECT LOW-INCOME RENTERS FROM DISCRIMINATION

City Hall, March 26, 2008 – At today’s Stated Council meeting, the members of the New York City Council will vote to override the Mayor’s veto on legislation that will ensure full opportunity for New Yorkers with limited incomes to obtain affordable housing by prohibiting discrimination against tenants based on lawful source of income. This legislation will help maximize the use of available Section 8 vouchers and help low-income families access safe and permanent housing.

Additionally, the Council will vote on two separate bills regarding the recycling of e-waste and a rezoning of 9 acres along First Avenue.

PROHIBITING DISCRIMINATION IN HOUSING BASED ON SOURCE OF INCOME

The Council will vote override the Mayor’s veto of a bill that will prohibit discrimination against prospective tenants based on lawful source of income, protecting New Yorkers from housing discrimination and helping those with limited incomes find and maintain affordable housing by maximizing the use of Section 8 vouchers or other forms of governmental rent payment in the City. The override vote comes after nearly a year of working with the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), landlord and tenant advocacy groups to improve the administration of the Section 8 voucher programs.

“With the rising cost of housing, it’s critical that we take every possible step to preserve and increase access to affordable housing, and this legislation continues the Council’s efforts to do just that,” said **Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn**. “This legislation, thanks to the hard work of the Council, ACORN and other housing groups, will not only increase access for people eligible for Section 8 vouchers to affordable housing, it will fully protect an individual’s right to housing, regardless of their financial circumstances.”

“As difficult as it is to find affordable housing in New York City, it is significantly harder to find an apartment with a Section 8 voucher,” said **General Welfare Committee Chair Bill de Blasio**. “This legislation will help maximize available Section 8 vouchers and help low-income families access the housing they are eligible for and desperately need.”

Understanding that small landlords may have difficulty with the administrative burden that can come with the Section 8 program, the legislation exempts landlords who own five or fewer units. However, rent controlled tenants who reside in these small properties would come under the protection of the law. The law applies to all housing accommodations, regardless of the number of units in each, of anyone who owns at least at least one property of six or more units.

A study released by ACORN NY in April of 2007 revealed that of 122 available studios and one bedroom apartments within section 8 limits listed on Craigslist, The Daily News or The New York Times classifieds, only 16 of the owners surveyed would accept Section 8 vouchers. In January of 2007, Mayor Bloomberg announced that 22,000 new Section 8 vouchers would be made available in New York City by the federal government, greatly increasing the number of low-income residents who can afford an apartment. This protective legislation will help maximize the use of available Section 8 vouchers and help low-income families access the housing for which they are eligible.

EAST RIVER DEVELOPMENT

The Council will vote on a plan to rezone over nine acres of First Avenue from 35th to 41st Streets. It allows for growth that has been widely approved by the community and greatly reduces the environmental, traffic and shadow impacts that the proposed towers would have imposed on the surrounding neighborhood. Additionally, the plan creates five acres of new public open space, a new public school, affordable housing (with incentives to create moderate- and middle-income housing), and ground-level retail to establish a vibrant mixed-use community.

“This is a truly sensible development, and one that respects open space and will add value to our neighborhood,” **said Council Member Garodnick**. “The Council is amending the project to address every area of concern put forward by the local community, while clearing the way for development that will bring significant revenue to the City and create thousands of new jobs.”

PLACE HOLDER Katz

E-WASTE RECYCLING

Lastly, the Council will vote on two separate pieces of legislation regarding the recycling of e-waste. The first bill covers all the elements of the original e-waste plan, including requiring manufacturers to finance a take-back system that is convenient for the citizens of the City of New York. The second bill will cover only the elements creating enforceable collections standards.

PLACE HOLDER Quinn

PLACE HOLDER de Blasio

At the last stated meeting, the Speaker announced that the Council reached an agreement with Mayor Bloomberg on the electronic waste legislation passed by the Council in February. Both the Council and the Mayor have agreed on the importance of an e-waste program, and on the majority of elements in the original legislation. However, the Mayor has opposed the Council’s inclusion of enforceable collections standards for electronic manufacturers.

Rather than allow that disagreement to delay implementation of this essential program, the Council split the legislation to allow for quicker implementation.

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