



THE COUNCIL OF  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

**ADRIENNE ADAMS**  
SPEAKER

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Mayor Eric Adams  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor Adams:

I am writing to express my disappointment in the lack of participation by some of your agencies in an important hearing related to the recent fire tragedy in the Bronx and associated legislation. On Wednesday, April 6, the City Council held an incredibly important oversight hearing on the tragic Twin Parks fire in which 17 New Yorkers, including eight children, lost their lives, where we heard legislation meant to prevent such tragedies in the future. It was a more than five-hour joint hearing of three committees: Fire and Emergency Management, Housing and Buildings, and the Twin Parks Citywide Taskforce on Fire Prevention – chaired by Council Members Ariola, Sanchez, and Feliz, respectively. Unfortunately, only two of the five required city agencies – Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) and the Fire Department (FDNY) attended the hearing. This leads me to presume that your administration does not treat this important topic with the full seriousness deserved.

The failure to make relevant agencies and staff available for public hearings subverts the City Council's oversight role, prevents public evaluation of legislation, and denies the public transparency. At least one of the absent agencies, the Department of Buildings (DOB), had specifically been requested to attend by staff of the City Council via invitation over one week prior. Subsequently, a follow-up phone call was placed with City Legislative Affairs six days prior to the hearing date, and a final reminder the day before the hearing. However, your administration should not have needed either request or invitation, since the necessary presence of the agencies was obvious, even to your other agencies.

In HPD's prepared testimony, referring to five of the bills being heard, they said their agency "defers to our colleagues at... DOB for comments." They also made reference to deferring to colleagues "who have expertise in environmental efficiency and sustainability," presumably referring either to the Department of Environmental Protection or the Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice.

In FDNY's prepared testimony, in comments on one bill, they said they "defer to our colleagues at the Department of Consumer and Worker Protection." In response to two other bills they said they "defer to the Department of Buildings."

It is certainly correct for agencies to defer to their knowledgeable colleagues in other agencies. However, the prepared testimony demonstrates that your administration *knew*, and did not need a request from the City Council to convey that these other agencies were necessary participants for a hearing on the relevant topics. Written testimony from those other agencies could and should have been prepared and read at the hearing, along with the necessary participation of agency representatives to provide clarity and respond to questions. We would also expect for you to have staff of those agencies present who could speak intelligently on the proposed legislation and respond to Council Member questions. Instead, your administration knowingly failed to provide both the City Council and the public with the benefit of those agencies' knowledge. To have done so for a hearing on such an important topic is even more troubling.

The City Council takes our hearings and oversight responsibilities seriously on behalf of the more than 8.4 million New Yorkers we represent. The tragic Twin Parks fire, and how we can prevent such fires from occurring in the future, is an issue of particular significance to this Council and our city. I am requesting that your administration and agencies fulfill the adequate level of participation in future Council hearings that is respectful of the accountability, oversight and transparency that New Yorkers deserve and expect of our government.

Respectfully,



**ADRIENNE E. ADAMS**  
Speaker

cc: Chief of Staff Frank Carone  
First Deputy Mayor Lorraine Grillo  
Director of City Legislative Affairs Jessica Carrano