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OF

THE CITY OF NEW YORK

ROBERT E. CORNEGY, JR.

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February 14, 2018

Mr. Alphonso David, Esq.
Counsel to the Governor
Executive Chamber
State Capitol
Albany, New York 12224

Dear Mr. David:

I appreciate my meeting last week with Governor Cuomo to discuss relevant city and state issues and found it most informative.

As Chairperson of the City Council's Committee on Housing and Buildings, I am most interested in addressing the crisis facing the residents of the New York City Public Housing Authority (NYCHA).

As you have probably read in newspapers, the City Council of New York has exposed a number of dangerous conditions existing in NYCHA housing developments. We have determined that there is a significant lead paint problem, although it is still unclear as to its full extent and the effectiveness of past remediation efforts. Lead paint is a poison that can create irreversible damage in children.

It is also clear that the NYCHA management and City Administration have not handled this issue competently. We need facts and action. I have heard that State Senator Sanders had requested that the State Department of Health perform inspections of the NYCHA housing projects in his district. Will the State perform these inspections and, if so, why would the State limit its inspections to only one Senate District when we know it is a city-wide problem? I would appreciate your response.

NYCHA has also admitted that many of their developments have no heat or hot water. Many of my own constituents who live in the Marcy Houses – home to over 4,000 New Yorkers – have been calling me as recently as this morning to complain of the lack of heat in their apartments.

This poses an imminent threat to public health, especially in these frigid months. NYCHA, and the City Administration, have admitted their inability to expeditiously resolve the situation. They claim that contracting and bidding regulations could slow the process to a three-year completion schedule. The idea that residents could go without heat or hot water for three years is causing panic among NYCHA residents – as well it should. My office's review of available legal options suggests that the State could declare an emergency to allow for expedited bidding and contracting with outside companies which are deemed competent to perform the necessary work.

Accordingly, I have two specific questions. First, does the State indeed have the power of declaring a State of Emergency which could expedite the restoration of heat and hot water? Second, would the State be willing to issue such a declaration in this situation? There is no doubt that the lack of heat and hot water in NYCHA developments poses an imminent threat to public health, which would justify – if not mandate – the State taking immediate action.

Thank you for your cooperation and courtesy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Cornegy, Jr.', written in a cursive style.

Robert E. Cornegy, Jr.