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Comments to the NYC Department of Buildings on the Implementation of Local Law 97

November 14, 2022

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments today on the proposed rules for the implementation of Local Law 97. In 2019, the New York City Council passed the landmark energy efficiency mandate Local Law 97 to tackle greenhouse gas emissions in the city's largest buildings. Today, the City Council continues to speak for millions of New Yorkers who will accept nothing less than a robust implementation of Local Law 97 that centers equity and accelerates our transition away from fossil fuels.

I thank the NYC Department of Buildings for the comprehensive work to promulgate the rules for the implementation of Local Law 97 (LL97). I recommend the final rules prioritize the following goals and objectives:

1. Limits on Renewable Energy Credits (RECs). It is important to not allow for loopholes in the implementation of LL97 that will reduce the focus on on-site improvements in buildings. While limiting RECs to electricity is a step in the right direction, there must also be a strict cap on the use and availability of RECs for building owners. Direct energy efficiency building investment is what will drive reductions in local air pollution, generate thousands of local jobs, and create healthier homes and businesses. We must ensure wealthy building owners cannot buy their way out of this critical commitment.
2. Protect and prioritize tenants. With ongoing housing pressures, it is vital for the City to provide more programs and services for building owners and tenants to better understand LL97 and its implications. An equitable LL97 implementation means tenants have the needed protections to avoid unintended consequences like displacement.
3. Incentivize building retrofits. The City must offer incentives to help residential buildings make necessary upgrades. By maximizing the benefits of state and federal programs, NYC can ensure that building owners are receiving all the possible benefits. The City also needs to provide new financing tools and funding, while supplementing the ones that already exist for building owners, especially small-property owners.

4. Training and workforce development opportunities for high-quality, career-track employment. The City should invest in successful union-linked pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, and certification training programs to fully support the growing clean energy industry and expand access to good green jobs. The City must also support the development of clean energy-related businesses in environmental justice communities.

New York City can only achieve its climate goals and mandates with a strong implementation of Local Law 97. I look forward to future collaborations.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sandy Nurse', followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Sandy Nurse
New York City Council Member, District 37