



July 7, 2023

Community Housing Improvement Program Testimony on Proposed NYPD Drone Rules

Thank you for holding this hearing today. I am Adam Roberts, Policy Director for the Community Housing Improvement Program, also known as CHIP. We represent New York's housing providers, including apartment building workers and owners. We are here to support legalizing the use of drones.

Drones can significantly improve the safety of New York's apartment buildings. Most critically, they will enable building facade inspections to occur more efficiently, as operating a drone is less time consuming and expensive than building and maintaining scaffolding. The use of drones is also likely to produce more accurate facade inspection reports for Local Law 11, when compared with in-person visual inspections through scopes and cameras from the ground level.

Regular facade inspections with drones could reduce the time and expense of Local Law 11 work. If drone use enables Local Law 11 inspections to become easier and less costly to perform, these efficiencies could allow for more frequent inspections, allowing facade issues to be caught sooner. This would lead to less time-consuming facade work, ultimately reducing the length of time scaffolding remains up.

Outside of facade inspections, drones can also assist with marketing apartment buildings and even individual units. Throughout the country, drones are regularly used for taking pictures for marketing materials in real estate transactions. The inability to do so in New York makes buildings and apartments more difficult to market.

Drone use must be properly regulated to ensure the safety of the general public. The compliance scheme adopted for our industry should consider the professional qualifications of applicants. This is particularly critical for facade inspections, as those operating drones should be the same professionals who are already legally allowed to perform Local Law 11 inspections. This will ensure that those hired to use drones to inspect facades have the expertise to determine a facade's state of repair.

Drones offer enormous potential for our industry and the city as a whole. They can make our buildings safer, reduce the burden of scaffolding on our streets, and improve access to New York's apartments for rent. Therefore, we strongly support the legalization of drones. Thank you.