July 5, 2023

 **VIA EMAIL**

ROHIT T. AGGARWALA

Commissioner of Environmental Protection

 NYC Department of Environmental Protection

 30 Pike St, New York, NY 10002

Raggarwala@dep.nyc.gov

 VINCENT SAPIENZA

 Chief Operating Officer

NYC Department of Environmental Protection

 30 Pike St, New York, NY 10002

Vsapienza@dep.nyc.gov

Re: Opposition to DEP Enforcement of Section 24-149.5 of Local Law 38

Dear Commissioner Aggarwala and Chief Operating Officer Sapienza,

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing on behalf of the New York City Pizza Alliance, a coalition of pizzeria owners and enthusiasts who share a deep passion for preserving the cherished tradition of New York City's iconic pizzerias. We are writing to express our strong opposition to the recently proposed rule that mandates the installation of emission control devices on wood and coal-fired ovens installed in pizzerias before May of 2016.

While we acknowledge and support the City's efforts to reduce carbon emissions and promote a greener environment, we believe that this particular requirement places an undue burden on a specific segment of our community – the pizzerias that have been operating and serving our neighborhoods for decades. These establishments are already facing numerous challenges in a competitive post-pandemic market, and the additional financial strain of purchasing and maintaining expensive emission control devices may prove to be insurmountable for many of them.

Our stance is not rooted in a disregard for the environment. On the contrary, we are committed to being responsible stewards of our city's resources and are willing to explore alternative methods to reduce carbon emissions without placing an unfair disadvantage on certain businesses.

This issue clearly runs deeper than pizza – with New York City changing and evolving every day, there needs to be a concerted effort by its inhabitants and government to safeguard the institutional and cultural practices that have made this city the best in the world. It is our job as New Yorkers to fight back special interests that seek to destroy the fabric of our city and its culinary greatness.

We propose that, instead of enforcing the mandatory installation of emission control devices, the city consider adopting programs that incentivize pizzerias to adopt environmentally friendly practices. This could involve promoting voluntary initiatives to adopt cleaner technologies, offering financial support or grants to assist with the installation of emission control devices, or investing in educational programs to raise awareness about sustainable practices in the food industry.

Additionally, we urge the City to collaborate with the New York City Pizza Alliance and other relevant stakeholders to conduct a thorough and impartial analysis of the actual carbon emissions from wood and coal-fired ovens in comparison to other sources of emissions within the city. This data-driven approach will help us better understand the real impact of such ovens on New York City's overall carbon footprint, allowing us to develop targeted and effective solutions to address any environmental concerns.

In conclusion, we respectfully request that the New York City Department of Environmental Protection reconsider the implementation of the current mandate and, instead, engage in constructive dialogue with our alliance to find a fair and equitable resolution. By working together, we can preserve our cherished pizzerias' authenticity while collectively pursuing meaningful strategies to promote a more sustainable New York City.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. We look forward to the opportunity to discuss our proposals further.

Sincerely,

Brad Gerstman