

AIA New York Chapter

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The American Institute of Architects



Testimony on Proposed Changes to 421-a

The New York Chapter of the AIA supports a broad overhaul of the 421-a program. We concur with the position of the Council and various others that revisions can provide a means by which affordable housing can be built in the city and at the same time increase tax revenues by reducing the property tax increase exemptions now available. However, we disagree with several proposals that are on the table, both by the Task Force and by speaker Quinn.

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The Task Force proposal identifies four areas of reform

- enlargement of the GEA
- elimination of the negotiable certificate program
- elimination of the extended exemptions for NPP and REMIC areas
- increasing minimum units for eligibility from three to six

Although the reforms succeed in supporting the construction of much needed housing, there are some areas of concern:

We agree in principal with the enlargement of the GEA to require on-site affordable housing as a condition of the 20 year exemption. The expansion of the GEA in Manhattan and Brooklyn insures that the diversity that is a critical element in the life of the City is protected.

However, we are concerned that the elimination of the Negotiable Certificate Program will have a negative impact on the construction of affordable housing. These certificates provide a mechanism for financing affordable housing off-site in areas desperate for affordable housing. Rather than eliminate the certificate program altogether, we support modifications which would increase the price of the certificates and enhance administration of the program.

Similarly, we do not support raising the minimum number of units from three to six. We feel that this will eliminate much affordable housing in fringe areas where infill housing is common.

Altogether, we support the position laid out in more detail by the CHPC. We feel that without these modifications to the proposed legislation, the quantity and quality of affordable housing created will suffer.

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