

## **American Institute of Architects New York Testimony to the Committee on Housing and Buildings and Committee on Environmental Protection**

Thank you, Chair Sanchez and Chair Gennaro, for holding this hearing today. The American Institute of Architects New York, also known as AIA New York, is the professional association representing nearly 6,000 of New York City's architects and related professionals.

Since our founding in 1857, AIA New York and our members have worked to advance the quality of life of New Yorkers and protect the public's health, safety and welfare. Working alongside our partners in City government, AIA New York has and will continue to be a strong supporter of Local Law 97 (LL97).

As you know, buildings contribute two-thirds of the city's total greenhouse gas emissions. LL97 is the centerpiece of the city's climate strategy for large buildings and is crucial to delivering NYC's low-carbon future. The law will also bring important co-benefits, like lower pollution and greater health and comfort to New Yorkers across the five boroughs.

AIA New York is committed to working with the Council and the Administration to successfully implement Local Law 97 and ensure compliance within the design, construction and building industry. With important milestones approaching, increased funding is essential to continued climate progress, and to ensure all New Yorkers benefit from a recovery that boosts green jobs and healthy, low-carbon and efficient buildings.

The City must commit to properly funding the Office of Building Energy and Emissions Performance (OBEEP), which is housed within the Department of Buildings. The office is severely understaffed, with only a handful of staffers overseeing compliance for thousands of the city's largest buildings, making enforcement more difficult. In addition, the staff shortage complicates the office's ability to take on further responsibilities and initiatives related to compliance with LL97, such as providing education on sustainable design techniques. We applaud Speaker Adams and the Council's response to the FY 23 Preliminary Budget, calling on the Administration to include baseline funding of \$450,000 in the Executive Budget for six additional positions within OBEEP to assist with Local Law 97 implementation.

AIA New York also urges the City to lead by example, by increasing funding to achieve the City's own requirements under LL 97, which include reducing emissions from government operations 40 percent by 2025 and 50 percent by 2030. The Department of Citywide Administrative Services is in charge of overseeing much of this work, and they have developed a comprehensive plan for meeting the targets. The city should invest further in those agencies that oversee capital works, as they are integral in ensuring that city buildings comply with the law's provisions. Additional funding is needed to ensure the Department of Design and Construction and other agencies can pay for the work and are sufficiently staffed to oversee this significant increase in retrofits.

We have seen already that a lack of funding has decreased confidence in the ability of the city to effectively enforce the law. The best way for the city to rebut these concerns is to properly fund those city agencies who oversee its compliance.

Again, thank you for holding this important hearing today. Our organization and members remain committed to working with the Council and Administration to deliver NYC's low-carbon future.

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