

**American Institute of Architects New York
Testimony to the Committee on Housing and Buildings, Committee
on Fire and Emergency Management, and Special Committee on
Twin Parks Citywide Taskforce on Fire Prevention**

Thank you to the City Council 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 is committed to resolving the fire safety challenges that our city faces and looks forward to working with the City Council to take actions that will prevent future tragedies from taking place.

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In the wake of the tragedy on January 9, architects and others saw how the deaths from the fire were entirely preventable. While self-closing doors have long been mandatory and the dangers that space heaters pose are well-established, a lack of proper enforcement of building codes meant that Twin Parks Northwest had broken self-closing doors and a faulty heating system, forcing tenants to supplement with space heaters.

AIA New York applauds the Council and the Twin Parks Fire Safety Task Force for their work creating the sensible legislation being introduced today. This multifaceted approach, which includes inspection, communication, and prevention strategies, will ultimately help save lives. In particular, we are in support of Introductions 104, 105, 106, and 131. Intro. 104 effectively adds the term "self-closing door" to the Housing Maintenance Code. The Department of Buildings should consider issuing a corresponding Building Notice upon enactment of this legislation. Intro. 105 reduces the time allowed to correct a violation regarding self-closing doors and increases penalties for false certification. Intro. 106 prohibits the sale of electric space heaters without automatic shut-off, which we saw contributed to the start of the fire on January 9. Finally, Intro. 131 provides for additional fire safety education and outreach through the Fire Department.

Of the legislation under consideration today, AIA New York is in opposition to Intro. 115, which raises the required minimum temperatures to be maintained in residential buildings. Recognizing that this legislation will increase the use of fossil fuels and the release of harmful emissions into our City, we hope to work with Council to provide alternative solutions that keep New Yorkers warm during the coldest months. The City and the private sector have each committed to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions through the Climate Mobilization Act and Local Law 97, whose goals run counter to this proposed legislation.

Thank you again for your timely and important work addressing our city's fire safety. Today's actions are an essential step towards preventing another tragedy from ever occurring again and we look forward to continuing this critical work together.