

September 26, 2023

AIA New York Testimony to the City Council Committee on Housing and Buildings on Intro 1031

Thank you, Speaker Adams, Chair Sanchez, Chair Salamanca, and members of the Committee on Housing and Buildings and Committee on Land Use, for holding this hearing today. I am Bria Donohue, Government Affairs Manager at AIA New York. We represent architects and design professionals committed to positively impacting the physical and social qualities of our city.

AIA New York strongly supports the City Council's efforts to create a fair housing plan. Intro 1031 will require city agencies, specifically HPD, DCP, and DOB, to put together a report on social indicators, equity, true cost of living measures, and fair housing every five years. The data and assessment needed for this report – such as, analysis of housing units produced, displacement risk and vulnerability, infrastructure capacity, and climate change vulnerability – will demand resources from city agencies that we are concerned they do not have the capacity to allocate at this time to an additional project.

While we are supportive of this well-intentioned plan, implementation is key to the success of this proposal, and funding is the essential element missing from this bill. For city agencies to effectively develop a fair housing plan, they require adequate funding and staffing. City agencies are already overburdened and struggling with limited staff capacity, so requiring additional reporting and analysis risks further delaying work and not providing the desired outcome for the city.

This bill is a great opportunity to increase transparency on citywide data related to fair housing and a citywide assessment of the need and supply of affordable housing, but the lack of financial support for agencies makes the bill's intentions a challenge to achieve, particularly in the desired timeline. Mayor Adams' recent announcement on impending budget cuts of 15% to all city agencies by FY2025 as well as a hiring freeze only exacerbates these challenges.

A Fair Housing Plan will add significant value to New York City and our understanding of the city's need for affordable housing. It is vital that the city funds its agencies accordingly to produce this valuable assessment and catch up to other states who have already been conducting similar analysis.