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Reintroduced Bill to Gut NYC's Landmark Climate and Jobs Law Slammed as Real Estate Lobby Attack Begins

Proposed Linda Lee bill would eviscerate Local Law 97, which is creating thousands of local jobs, cutting utility bills, and reducing pollution.

New York, NY — Advocates were joined by New York City Comptroller Brad Lander in slamming NYC City Councilmember Linda Lee's re-introduced bill, Intro 772 (previously Intro 1197). The bill, written by the real estate lobby, will gut Local Law 97, New York City's nation-leading climate and jobs law.

Local Law 97, in effect as of January 1, requires all buildings larger than 25,000 square feet to limit climate-heating carbon emissions, driving toward net zero emissions by 2050. Buildings are New York City's largest polluters, responsible for 70% of the city's greenhouse gas emissions. The bill leads to major investments in energy efficiency upgrades, creating jobs and cutting utility bills.

Intro 772 would create a collection of major loopholes that would exempt thousands of buildings from the law. For example, it allows lawns and other "green" space to be included in calculations of a building's size, falsely making it appear that its pollution per square foot is lower than reality.

"As a member of the City Council, I was proud to be a part of history by passing the most ambitious building emissions law in the country in 2019," **said NYC Comptroller Brad Lander**. "But Local Law 97 will not work if the law is watered down, and Intro 772 does exactly that. Today, New York has an opportunity to push an equitable shift away from fossil fuels while creating good green jobs. The City Council must reject Intro 772."

Local Law is achieving its goals, [with 90% of covered buildings in compliance](#) with the law's initial 2024-2029 pollution cap, as of the most recent public data (2022). Thousands of jobs are being created as pollution and utility bills are reduced through energy efficiency projects spurred by the law, which was enacted in 2019.

Food & Water Watch Senior NY Organizer Eric Weltman said: "Local Law 97 is building a cleaner future for New York. The corporate real estate industry's bald-faced effort to gut the law will only take our city backwards — Intro 772 must be dead on arrival. Local Law 97 is working just as intended, slashing climate-warming pollution and creating good, clean energy jobs. Mayor Adams must staff up agencies responsible for seeing this law's implementation through, and ignore efforts to gut this critical progress."

While the real estate lobby pushes to gut New York's landmark law, advocates held a public forum in Forest Hills last night, moderated by former council member Costa Constantinides, with

special guest Public Advocate Jumaane Williams, to discuss tools and techniques to help New Yorkers comply with the law and benefit from healthier, cleaner homes.

Denise Patel, Climate Campaigns Consultant, NY Communities for Change said, “This bill is just another effort by REBNY and the industry to undermine Local Law 97. If fully implemented, Local Law 97 will create thousands of jobs, save money for New Yorkers with lower energy bills, and cut climate and health damaging pollution. We need Councilmembers to stand up as climate leaders and get to work providing help to owners for upgrading buildings, not add loopholes that only benefit developers.”

TREEage Co-Executive Director Shiv Soin said: “Local Law 97 is one of the most important laws in New York City to combat climate change. Yet, the law continues facing attacks from the Mayor, the real estate industry, and once again, members of the City Council. Intro 772 does not follow science or acknowledge that an overwhelming majority of buildings are either on track with LL97 or on the pathway to do so. No longer are big giveaways to developers acceptable. Students have been actively organizing to preserve and protect Local Law 97 because we know how important this law truly is. We strongly urge the Council to reject this legislation and instead focus on how to ensure our city will be resilient in the face of a climate crisis.”

NYPIRG Program Director Meg Ahearn said: “New York City made history when the 2019 City Council passed and the former Mayor signed Local Law 97. We know this law is necessary to improve the health of our communities, create tens of thousands of jobs, lower energy costs, and decrease pollution throughout the city. But Intro 772 threatens those goals. We are calling on today’s City Council and Mayor Adams to reject being on the wrong side of history and reject this real estate industry-backed bill introduction.”

“New Yorkers can be justly proud of Local Law 97. Five years after its passage, it’s time to ensure its evenhanded implementation,” said **Sara Gronim of 350Brooklyn**. “Efforts by the city’s wealthiest building owners to create loopholes in order to evade their share of our shared responsibility towards the health and wellbeing of all New Yorkers is appalling. The City Council must decisively reject these underhanded tactics.”

“As design and construction professionals intimately familiar with the city, we believe our communities and families deserve buildings that are energy efficient, comfortable, and support their health; the energy policies and standards in Local Law 97 make this future possible. Renovation projects spurred by Local Law 97 are already creating construction jobs, enhancing real estate values, and moving us toward a greener New York. We hope Council will find ways to support residents and achieve our climate goals together; compliance and accounting loopholes like Intro 772 are not the answer,” said **Nate Strieter from the Alternative Building Industry (ABI) Collective**.

“We are in the midst of a climate emergency. Whether it be the Mayor refusing to fund Community Composting which is a simple way to push back against climate change; to lawsuits challenging Congestion Pricing; to the Mayor dragging his feet on closing Rikers to allow for us

to build a Renewable Rikers, it seems the clear solutions are always being challenged. Local Law 97 has proved it will decrease a building's carbon footprint. Any changes to this law will just weaken our response to climate change," says **Mark Laster, Co-Chair, Forest Hills Green Team.**

"Combating the effects of climate change is the challenge of our lifetime, and city officials stepped up for all New Yorkers when they passed Local Law 97. It's discouraging that current city council members and the real estate lobby have attempted to undermine the law with Intro 772. It is critical for all New Yorkers that Local Law 97 remains intact and residents are given the tools and information for its implementation. The City Council must reject Intro 772 and any other piece of legislation that attempts to chip away at LL 97. The time has come to embrace the decarbonization of our buildings, and there is no time left for bogus workarounds like the loophole driven Intro 772," **said Elaine O'Brien, Queens Climate Project.**

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