

CITY BUDGET 2012-13

IF YOU WISH TO SPEAK TO CITY COUNCIL, PRINT YOUR NAME, ADDRESS, AND EMAIL.

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Testimony to Portland City Council
Wednesday, 9:30 AM, May 30, 2012
The Portland Building
1120 SW 5th Avenue, 2nd Floor Auditorium

Item 581– Approval of the FY 2012-13 Budget for the City of Portland

Moriah McSharry McGrath, MPH, MSUP
Research Analyst, Health Assessment and Evaluation unit
Multnomah County Health Department

Good morning, Mayor Adams and Commissioners.

My name is Moriah McSharry McGrath and I'm a Research Analyst at the Multnomah County Health Department. The Health Department is one of several housing and health stakeholders who participated in a Health Impact Assessment – or HIA – of rental housing inspections in Portland. The HIA was led by Oregon Public Health Institute and was designed to examine the relative health impacts of the two inspection models currently used by the City.

The HIA found that the enhanced inspection program is more effective at assuring community health than the standard complaint-based inspection program. The effectiveness of either model would increase if paired with education for both tenants and landlords. We also found that the enhanced model is a powerful tool for improving health equity, because the benefits are focused on vulnerable renters.

It is because of these findings that we recognize the leadership of Mayor Adams and Portland City Council in your commitment to maintain current service levels through funding neighborhood inspectors in the 2013 budget. Housing inspections not only preserve our housing stock and protect property owners' investments, but they keep our community healthy. The inspections program is a lifeline for families suffering from asthma, injuries, and mental health problems that are connected to substandard housing – because some property owners are unwilling or unable to improve their property without city intervention.

Maintaining current services is a vital first step. But to achieve the Portland Plan's health and equity goals, we need an even more robust inspection program. We urge you to allocate the resources to support such a program, which would include:

1. strategic expansion of the enhanced inspection model to parts of the city with higher rates of cost-burdened households,
2. adoption of the tenant and landlord education strategies developed by the Quality Rental Housing Workgroup, and
3. timely implementation of the Bureau of Development Services Information Technology Advancement Project (ITAP).

Thank you!

Press Release-

Date May 30, 2012

From – Scott Fernandez M.Sc. biology/microbiology

scottfernandez.pdx@gmail.com 503.282,1894

Subject- Waiver request New York City

For the last decade stakeholders and citizens of Portland have been demanding a “waiver” from the EPA Long Term 2 Enhanced Surface Drinking Water regulation (LT2), including the open reservoirs. “We are asking for the waiver because we do not have a public health problem in the Bull Run drinking water system, and any added treatment or covering the reservoirs would be a waste of money and resources”, Scott Fernandez , microbiologist.

We have received information that New York City asked for an open reservoir waiver. They requested help based on action from their Congressional delegation. Portland has received no such help for a waiver from Portland City Council or the Oregon delegation. The citizens of Portland ask for Congressional and Portland City Council assistance in obtaining a waiver from EPA LT2 regulation.

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Crowley Spearheads Call for EPA to Waive Hillview Reservoir Mandate

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Costs for Unnecessary Project Would Increase Residents' Already Rising Water Rates

Aug 3, 2011 | Issues:

(Washington, D.C.) – Rep. Joseph Crowley (D-Queens, the Bronx) spearheaded a call for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to grant the City of New York a waiver from having to construct a cover over the Hillview Reservoir in Yonkers, New York. In a letter to EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson, Crowley and nine members of the New City Congressional Delegation urge the EPA to waive the mandate based on the significant economic burden it will place on New York City and its residents as well as the fact that the City is already building a facility to protect New York's water system from biological pathogens.

“Not only does this mandate hurt the pocketbooks of New Yorkers and the City, but it is also completely unnecessary,” said Rep. Crowley. “The City is already taking steps to ensure our drinking water is pure and safe, and adding an increased economic burden to achieve the same result just doesn't add up. That is why we are urging the EPA to waive this mandate and work with the City to find commonsense solutions to ensure New Yorkers continue to receive high-quality and safe water.”

The EPA mandate requires all open reservoirs that contain treated drinking water to be covered with concrete or undergo additional

retreatment processes to protect drinking water from biological pathogens. New York City will soon operate a \$1.6 billion ultraviolet disinfection plant that will treat the City's water for the same pathogens the mandated cover is intended to address, making the requirement redundant and overly burdensome for the City.

In addition, the costs associated with this project could result in increasing residents' already rising water rates. Water rates for New York City residents have increased 90% over the last five years, and costs associated with fulfilling this mandate could increase rates by another 3%.

"While we would never urge any action that would endanger the quality and safety of the tap water we all drink, we believe that the EPA's mandate is unnecessary and will saddle City ratepayers with additional, unnecessary costs," write the lawmakers in the letter.

New York City manages the largest and most-impressive drinking water system in the nation, providing clean drinking water to over 9 million residents and others living in the watershed area. In addition to building the new ultraviolet disinfection plant, the *City performs more than 500,000 water quality tests each year*. New York City has worked with the EPA to find common-sense approaches to protect the water system and maintain its high quality, while avoiding billions in unnecessary capital costs.

The full text of the letter to EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson is below:

August 2, 2011

Lisa Jackson

Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency

1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.

Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Jackson:

We are concerned about the proposed Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) mandate that the City of New York must construct a cover over the Hillview Reservoir in Yonkers, New York and urge you to grant a waiver of this mandate. The cost of the project could result in significant increases in costs for City ratepayers – who have already seen their water bills almost double since 2006. Further, at this point in time, the cover is redundant, since the City is soon set to operate an ultraviolet disinfection plant that will treat the City's water for the same pathogens that the Hillview cover is intended to prevent.

New York City manages the largest and most-impressive drinking water system in the nation, which provides clean drinking water to over 9 million residents and others located in the watershed area. There has been a long and effective partnership between the EPA and the City on drinking water management from the upstate reservoir system, including the oversight and management of the Catskill-Delaware system. In fact, the EPA has a long history of working collaboratively with New York City to find common-sense approaches to protect the water system and maintain its high quality while avoiding billions in unnecessary capital costs. For example, the filtration avoidance program the EPA and New York City implemented for the Catskill-Delaware system west of the Hudson River demonstrates a mutual commitment to providing the highest quality water at an affordable price. It is a program that has saved the City upwards of \$9 billion, but has consistently kept the water quality at the highest standards.

New York City is already in the process of completing a \$1.6 billion facility just north of the reservoir that will treat water using ultraviolet light. The facility is designed to address the same issue the cover would hope to address. Additionally, the City conducts more than 500,000 water quality tests annually to ensure the highest quality drinking water comes out of

the tap. These costly, but worthwhile investments in the water system clearly demonstrate New York City's commitment to maintaining a clean water supply and to implementing data-driven approaches to enhancing water quality.

While we would never urge any action that would endanger the quality and safety of the tap water we all drink, we believe that this EPA mandate is unnecessary and will saddle City ratepayers with additional, unnecessary costs.

For this reason, we urge you to issue a waiver of the EPA mandate of the construction of a cover over the Hillview Reservoir.

Sincerely,

Joseph Crowley

Eliot L. Engel

Charles B. Rangel

Nita M. Lowey

Michael G. Grimm

Gary L. Ackerman

Edolphus Towns

Yvette D. Clarke

Carolyn B. Maloney



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