



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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CHRISTINE BERTHET
Chair

ROBERT J. BENFATTO, JR., ESQ.
District Manager

May 27, 2014

Mayor Bill de Blasio
City Hall Park
New York, NY 10007

Re: Radon Gas Testing

Dear Mayor de Blasio,

The opening of the new Con Edison Spectra pipeline into Manhattan Community District 4 — coupled with new production of natural gas in New York State and Pennsylvania, and the phasing out of number six heating oil use and coincident increase of natural gas use for heating— has raised the concern of Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4) to the potential risk in our district of increased radon levels and exposure to its radioactive progeny.

We therefore strongly support, with the additional steps below, Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal's 2014 bill, A06863B, "to amend the public health law and the public service law, in relation to the protection of public health from exposure to radon in natural gas."

Radon Kills

Radon is a colorless, odorless, tasteless, radioactive gas, with a half-life of 3.8 days. It occurs naturally in our environment and it is contained in natural gas. At an acceptable level, it is not dangerous. Higher doses, however, can kill. Radon is recognized as a leading cause of lung cancer after smoking.

Transmitting natural gas from the Gulf Coast can take several days, which allows for a greater breakdown of radon in the gas. Transmission, in contrast, from the newly-opened, near-by gas fields takes hours rather than days, thus reducing the time radon has to break down, increasing its concentration in the gas supply serving our district.

The Rosenthal bill would insure, by mandated testing, that the radon levels in natural gas brought into New York are kept *below* acceptable levels.

Testing For Radon Is Critical

To MCB4's knowledge, there is no testing for radon in natural gas delivered to our district. We therefore urge the passage of A06863B and its Senate companion S04921-B (sponsor: Staten Island Senator Diane Savino) and request these additional steps be taken:

- The bill’s authors arrived at the numerical limits stated in the bill by referring to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency guidance. *We want to be kept apprised of those limits as the science informing these numbers improves.*
- The proposed legislation requires testing at “delivery points” of natural gas to a gas corporation’s distribution system. *These delivery points must be designed to include gas produced in New York State.*
- The proposed legislation requires corporations delivering gas to consumers to “establish and maintain a program to continuously monitor the level of radon and its radioactive progeny.” *The procedures and practices for testing must be closely supervised by the relevant state agency, the Department of Public Health.*
- The community must be informed. *The results of testing for radon gas in natural gas must be publically available and expressed in terms that laypeople can understand.*

Manhattan Community Board 4 looks forward to the rapid passage and implementation of these protections against dangerous exposure to radon.

Sincerely,



Christine Berthet
Chair



Maarten de Kadt Co-Chair
Waterfront, Parks &
Environment Committee



Delores Rubin Co-Chair
Waterfront, Parks &
Environment Committee

CC: Congressman Jerrold Nadler
Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito
Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer
Federal Representatives
State Senator Brad Hoylman
State Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal
State Assemblymember Richard Gottfried
Councilmember Corey Johnson