



**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE**
Alister F. Martin, MD, MPP
Commissioner

Testimony

of

Corinne Schiff

**Deputy Commissioner of Environmental Health
New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene**

before the

**New York City Council
Committee on Health**

on

Introduction 0943-2026

July 15, 2026
New York, NY

Good morning, Chair Schulman and members of the Health Committee. I am Corinne Schiff, Deputy Commissioner for Environmental Health at the New York City Health Department. On behalf of Commissioner Martin, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on Introduction 943. I am joined by Carlos Ortiz, Chief of Staff and Deputy Commissioner of External Affairs, at the NYC Department of Consumer and Worker Protection (DCWP).

Before discussing the legislation, I want to express my deep condolences and those of the Health Commissioner, and all of us at the Health Department, to the family of Romanch Mahajan. His death associated with a horse carriage ride was a terrible tragedy. It is unimaginable what his family is going through.

The oversight of the carriage horse industry requires citywide coordination, and the Health Department works closely with many other agencies also involved, including DCWP, NYPD, DOT, and NYC Parks. We also work closely with the Mayor's Office of Animal Welfare.

The Health Department is charged with issuing initial and renewal licenses for the carriage horses under the Administrative Code. Our process includes reviewing the horses' health certificates to check that horses are examined by their veterinarians every four to eight months, as well as reviewing owner records showing that the horses have had at least five weeks a year of vacation or furlough at a horse stable that allows daily access to a paddock or pasture. We make periodic observations of the horses' movement and overall body condition at the three Central Park hack stands, where carriages must pick up and discharge passengers, and monitor weather and issue weather-related suspensions. We also conduct the training course for aspiring carriage horse drivers that is a prerequisite to obtain a horse carriage driver license from DCWP.

Mayor Mamdani has been clear that New York City should join the other cities that no longer allow operation of a horse carriage industry, and the Administration supports the intent of Introduction 943. To promote a good outcome for the horses the bill would require the Health Department to provide horse owners with information about individuals and organizations that can receive or acquire horses for humane purposes and require owners to certify that they are not transferring or selling their horse for an inhumane purpose. The bill provides a two-year phase out period, providing time for owners and drivers to make this transition, and requires a workforce development program. The Administration is, however, critical of the insufficiencies of the worker protections in the bill and we look forward to working with the Council to address those concerns as we move forward on this important issue for New Yorkers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Deputy Commissioner Ortiz and I can now take your questions.