

**Testimony from NYCHA's Executive Vice President for Operations Support  
Services Keith Grossman**  
***Summer Preparedness in NYCHA Developments***  
**Committee on Public Housing**  
**Tuesday, June 13, 2023 – 1 p.m.**  
**New York City Hall Council Chambers**

Chair Alexa Avilés, members of the Committee on Public Housing, other distinguished members of the City Council, NYCHA residents, community advocates, and members of the public: good afternoon. I am Keith Grossman, NYCHA's Executive Vice President for Operations Support Services. I am pleased to be joined by Ukah Busgith, Executive Vice President for Resident Services, Partnerships, and Initiatives, and Vlada Kenniff, Senior Vice President for Sustainability.

Thank you for this opportunity to discuss how the Authority strives to keep residents safe and healthy during the summer season. Promoting the well-being of NYCHA residents and improving the community's quality of life is our top priority, as reflected by our greater mission as well as our day-to-day work.

**Emergency Preparedness**

NYCHA has teams and systems in place to address any emergencies that arise, from extreme heat to natural disasters such as extreme rain, coastal storms, and hurricanes. We recently merged our Emergency Services Department and Office of Emergency Management – the newly formed Emergency Management and Services Department (EMSD) can more comprehensively manage emergencies through emergency planning, response, and preventative infrastructure maintenance work across the Authority.

The EMSD team of more than 130 employees works to reduce NYCHA's vulnerability to hazards while assisting residents and staff to recover from day-to-day emergencies as well as large-scale disruptions. A key focus is on preventative measures, such as helping the community to proactively prepare for potential issues like extreme heat and storms. This involves disseminating informational materials to residents at events like Family Days, monitoring weather forecasts, planning for adequate response with City agencies, activating NYCHA's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) when needed, and prioritizing and deploying resources. Our responses to emergencies are coordinated not only internally, across departments, but also

with critical City, State, and federal partners – to ensure the availability of necessary resources, such as equipment, generators, and water stations, and to directly assist those who are impacted.

The EOC enables NYCHA to respond effectively to service interruptions as well as public safety hazards by coordinating the flow of resources and policy decisions. The EOC also communicates vital information and safety alerts to the NYCHA community through robocalls and social media advisories, amplifying the messaging of the City’s Advance Warning System.

When extreme heat is forecasted, NYCHA staff will make hundreds of outreach calls to vulnerable residents to ensure they are equipped with the appropriate information, services, and resources, such as access to air conditioning or a cooling center. We also disseminate information on staying safe to resident associations. Although cooling centers are managed by our City agency partners, NYCHA ensures that cooling centers located on our campuses have sufficient cooling capabilities.

NYCHA also works with our utility partners to reduce electrical consumption, and thus the strain on the electrical system, when necessary.

NYCHA prepares for summer emergencies before the season even begins, proactively monitoring our work order system for potential issues and readying key equipment. For instance, NYCHA has 28 stand-by generators on hand in case of power outages, along with a light tower, command bus, emergency response truck, water truck, and water stations. Additionally, we systematized our response processes and emergency plans and have trained and briefed staff across departments on emergency preparedness. That includes training elevator staff on how to respond to power outages. Development staff are also regularly provided with key safety information.

## **Climate Change and Resilience**

We recognize summers are getting hotter and extreme weather events more frequent. Numerous efforts are underway to make our developments more resilient. For instance, through the Clean Heat for All Challenge – a collaboration between NYCHA, the New York Power Authority (NYPA), and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority – an initial \$70

million investment is spurring the development and production of 30,000 new heat pumps for NYCHA residents. This electric, efficient, easily installable technology will provide reliable heating and, notably, universal cooling for thousands of residents.

Thanks to another partnership with NYPA, NYCHA is using a design-build delivery model to procure a solar and storage system that will power the critical loads of two senior buildings and a community center at Borinquen Plaza. Additionally, there are over 100 natural gas-powered generators in operation that can provide resilient electric back-up power to more than 10,500 NYCHA homes – and over 100 additional generators are on the way.

To prepare for extreme rains, NYCHA is designing cloudburst-resilient infrastructure at seven developments, with construction underway at one development. In addition, deployable and permanent infrastructure is in place to protect more than 170 of our buildings from coastal flooding.

### **Community Programming**

We are proud to offer young people a safe and productive place to be this summer, thanks to the extended hours at our community centers supported by partners like the NYC Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD). Summer meals are also available, and NYCHA residents are being hired for this effort at about 30 locations.

### **Productive Partnerships**

Whether it's with partners like New York City Emergency Management, New York City Aging, DYCD, NYPD, or the City Council, collaboration enables us to help ensure safe and healthy communities. Thank you for supporting these critical efforts. We look forward to our continued work together, and we are happy to answer any questions you may have.