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NEW YORK CITY DIVISION OF
HOUSING AND COMMUNITY RENEWAL
Public Hearing

Tuesday, November 15, 2022
10:39 a.m.
Yonkers Riverfront Library
1 Larkin Center, 2nd Floor
Yonkers, New York 10701

- COMMISSIONER WOODY PASCAL
- APRIL A. GRAY-HUERTAS, ESQ.
- PETER STECKER, ESQ.
- MARCIE KOBAK
- WOODY PASCAL
- LISA DEROSA
- ALANA CIUFFETELLI
- PHILIP WEIDEN
- TEDDY THOMAS
- KEN NIELSEN
- HOWIE RAVIKOFF

REPORTER: ELAINE LAROSEE

1 (The meeting commenced at 10:29 a.m.)

2 MR. PETER STECKER: Thank you, Deputy Commissioner.
3 We do have Marcie Kobak, who's here in Westchester.

4 MS. MARCIE KOBAK: Good morning. My name is Marcie
5 Kobak, and I'm from Legal Services of the Hudson Valley.
6 We're a civil legal service provider. We represent
7 tenants and see every day the struggle that New Yorkers
8 face due to the lack of affordable and quality housing in
9 our state.

10 I've submitted relatively detailed written comments,
11 and I'll just briefly highlight a couple of points.

12 So the amended regulation on substantial
13 rehabilitation and the deteriorated -- the finding of a
14 deteriorated condition, meaning that a landlord's not
15 eligible for that exemption. In the proposed regulation,
16 it requires a finding of harassment. If I were to walk
17 up the hill to Yonkers City Court and ask one of the
18 judges to enter a finding of harassment, I would be
19 laughed out of the courtroom. That is a finding that's
20 made in HP proceedings, which we currently don't have
21 outside of New York City. So a broader finding, such as
22 a code violation, would be more applicable to tenants
23 outside of New York City.

24 Then I'll just note in there two places regarding
25 primary residency addressing survivors of domestic

1 violence, which I appreciate that very important
2 inclusion. And we would recommend making it clear that
3 documentation conforming with the 2019 amendment to
4 RPL 227-c being sufficient to establish domestic violence
5 victims' status would be of a benefit.

6 Next, I'll move on to just a couple of points on
7 municipalities newly adopting ETPA. I go into more
8 detail in the written comments, but more deadlines --
9 more specific deadlines, the more expeditious process
10 between the declaration of an emergency and a rent
11 guidelines board vote would benefit tenants, because fear
12 and confusion and bad acts and lack of faith in the
13 process, we've been already starting to see increase the
14 longer that process is delayed.

15 We'd also recommend a Fair Market Rent Appeal form,
16 which prompts the tenant to include the information which
17 is actually prompted in the statute. And particularly as
18 when a municipality adopts ETPA, there may be tenants who
19 have a good faith basis to file both a fair market rent
20 appeal and a rent overcharge claim, for example, for
21 rents increased during the time when they were to be
22 frozen. It makes it even more confusing that there's not
23 a specific Fair Market Rent Appeal form.

24 And there was a laudable addition that an actual
25 physical mailing address or service of process can be

1 made for the actual owner of a building to be provided.
2 And the initial registration statement could be
3 duplicated in several other places, such as requiring the
4 physical street address in annual statements, because
5 properties turn over, or LLCs change legal entities, so
6 frequently.

7 So duplicating that notice to tenants of who is the
8 actual owner and where could they be physically served
9 with process would be of a benefit. And I'll conclude
10 there. Thank you very much.

11 MR. WOODY PASCAL: Thank you very much. Now we'll
12 call on Oksana Mironova from Community Service Society of
13 New York. (indiscernible).

14 (Audio missing)

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Good morning.

16 MR. PASCAL: I turn it to Yonkers.

17 MR. STECKER: Thank you, Deputy Commissioner. The
18 next on the list signed up, I think, is Lisa DeRosa.

19 MS. LISA DEROSA: Good morning. Can you hear me?

20 MR. PASCAL: We hear you.

21 MS. DEROSA: Okay. Good morning. My name is Lisa
22 DeRosa, and I am president of DeRosa Builders, a family-
23 owned business my father founded in 1958. I am also the
24 first female president of The Building & Realty
25 Institute, the largest non-profit trade association in

1 Westchester.

2 Currently, my company owns and manages 400 apartment
3 units built between 1964 and 1973. At the time, our
4 buildings were hip, modern, and the place to be. After
5 all, if you lived in a DeRosa property, you had harvest
6 gold appliances with matching Formica countertops, on-
7 site laundry facilities, dishwashers, and red, orange, or
8 yellow shag carpeting.

9 I do not need to tell you the hammering my industry
10 has taken in the recent past, and there seems to be no
11 light at the end of the tunnel. Beginning with HSTPA and
12 the stranglehold that was placed upon building owners who
13 want to invest in their properties but can either no
14 longer afford to or cannot find the financial sense to
15 make these investments, followed by a pandemic where
16 there was no repercussion for not paying the rent, paying
17 it late, or leaving your apartment.

18 And now you want to place more regulations on us?
19 How much do you want to see our oldest inventory
20 deteriorate before you throw us a lifeline?

21 Right now there is a \$15,000 cap on improvements you
22 can make to an apartment. It does not matter if this is
23 a 3,000 square foot studio or a sprawling four-bedroom.
24 It does not matter that inflation is up over 8 percent
25 and building materials have skyrocketed 40 percent. It

1 does not change over time, and we all know that \$1 does
2 not get you nearly as much today as it did only a few
3 years ago.

4 I was recently approached by a relief organization
5 to assist in the placement and housing of Ukrainian
6 refugee families fleeing their war-ravaged country with
7 little more than the clothes on their backs. While I
8 have been able to assist a few, many require larger
9 apartments than I have to accommodate their extended
10 families.

11 Right now, I have the opportunity to merge two
12 adjacent units and provide a three-bedroom apartment for
13 either this family, or at another time, a family from my
14 community. I can assure you that the cost for legally
15 combining these units will far exceed \$15,000.

16 Additionally, even with updated bathrooms, new
17 appliances, and stone counters, at the end of the day, my
18 apartment is still in a 1971 building. We do not have
19 concierges, virtual or otherwises (sic), rooftop
20 gathering areas, conference or package rooms, or smart
21 home technology. And the infrastructure is not there to
22 add these items that the new buildings going up around me
23 have.

24 The market rents that my property will support are
25 far different than the market rents you see in newer

1 communities. However, my market rents are reasonable for
2 a family to support in Westchester.

3 The harsh transformations to the IAI program that
4 make it so financially unworkable are not due to
5 regulations alone but are required by the passage of
6 HSTPA. I recognize you may not have a lot of flexibility
7 on that, but we need whatever flexibility you can
8 provide.

9 But the curtailment of any financial incentive to
10 combine apartments to meet the demands of the
11 marketplace, renovate them, and set a new rent that can
12 make work financially stable, is a wholly new change in
13 these regulations.

14 Combining apartments is not very common, but it is
15 also not a loophole. It is one of the few remaining
16 options you have to renovate your apartment to meet the
17 demands of our community in a way that's financially
18 sustainable. With this new regulation, that wouldn't be
19 workable either.

20 At a time when the Westchester Needs Assessment
21 concluded that we need over 11,000 units today to meet
22 our housing needs, why on earth would you further
23 disincentivize current property owners from investing in
24 their properties and builders from coming here?

25 I have pictures of one of the apartments that I wish

1 to combine. This was the condition that it was left to
2 us in. The existing tenant passed away; we've reached
3 out to every family member, and they are not interested
4 in coming and doing anything, so we are left with an
5 entire lifetime worth of stuff to clean out, in addition
6 to everything else we need to repair.

7 I don't know if you can get these down to Manhattan.
8 I wasn't aware that it was going to be online.

9 MR. STECKER: Okay.

10 MS. DEROSA: Thank you.

11 MR. STECKER: Deputy Commissioner, we also have
12 Alana Ciuffetelli here to speak, who is next on the list.

13 MR. PASCAL: Let's do that, and we'll come back to
14 New York City.

15 MR. STECKER: Thank you.

16 MR. PASCAL: Thank you.

17 MS. ALANA CIUFFETELLI: Good morning. I thank you
18 for your time.

19 I'd first like to start by saying, by no means am I
20 warehousing units. By no means am I letting my buildings
21 run down. Because quite simply, I'm a small landlord; I
22 can't afford to do that.

23 But with that said, my name is Alana Ciuffetelli,
24 and I'm the Chair of the Apartment Owners Advisory
25 Counsel of The Building and Realty Institute in

1 Westchester County. I also sit on the board of directors
2 of the Westchesters Owners' Association. Not only have I
3 been a landlord for basically my entire life, but I am
4 also a real estate broker and a managing agent. I'm
5 extremely passionate about what I do and take the
6 responsibility that brings me very seriously.

7 A relationship between a tenant and a landlord is
8 important, not only to the landlord, but also our tenants
9 who have entrusted myself and my family with a
10 significant asset in their life – their home, their
11 apartment, which is within my building. I live and
12 breathe my buildings. Not only are they a piece of my
13 livelihood, but they're also part of my family legacy.

14 My management company is called 3C Realty because
15 three generations of Ciuffetellis have owned, managed,
16 and operated our buildings. With a 4th grade education
17 heavily rooted in his Italian heritage and little to no
18 understanding of the English language, my grandfather
19 risked it all in hopes of providing a better future for
20 his family and generations to come. And our buildings
21 have given back to us as much as we have given to them.

22 But for the first time in my life, I'm afraid. I'm
23 afraid of what is going to happen to my buildings, afraid
24 of what is going to happen to my tenants and my family
25 because of something that is totally beyond my control.

1 I'm speaking about the changes you referenced today to
2 ETPA and HSTPA in 2019, which resulted in the new law,
3 HSTPA. In particular, I would like to address the
4 changes made to IAIs.

5 Let me start by saying I realize this panel cannot
6 change what has been put into law, but my hope is that
7 you take the testimony of myself and my colleagues back
8 to Albany and really listen to what we are saying,
9 because circumstance are dire, and immediate changes are
10 needed when dealing with HSTPA, especially as it relates
11 to IAIs and MCIs.

12 Under the new law, a landlord is capped at \$15,000
13 and no more than three IAIs in over 15 years, no matter
14 the size of the apartment. That's nuts. No matter if
15 it's a studio, one-bedroom, two-bedroom, three-bedroom,
16 four-bedroom. That's nuts. This is impossible to
17 achieve.

18 Everyone here knows the effect of inflation that has
19 had on our cost of goods. Building and repair costs have
20 skyrocketed. I can't get any apartment renovated, not
21 even studio, and forget about a two-bedroom for \$15,000.

22 I want to provide quality and safe housing for our
23 tenants, but under this formula, I cannot make the
24 desired renovation to apartments and provide my tenants
25 with the items they want, like new kitchens, new

1 bathrooms, new appliances. The quality service I think
2 my tenants are entitled to costs resources, time, but
3 most importantly, money. The changes made to IAI strips
4 us of the needed to give my tenants what they deserve.

5 Also, the changes to IAIs and MCIs have had a
6 crushing impact on our local vendors, contractors, and
7 local economies. I've had to explain time and time again
8 on more than one occasion to my local hardware that I
9 can't buy what I used to buy. And he's hearing this over
10 and over and over again. This is crushing business.

11 One could argue that a tenant, too, has felt the
12 same effects of inflation. To that I say, you're right.
13 No one is recession proof. No one is inflation proof.
14 But many of my tenants realize and work with me, that if
15 they want a certain level of service, it unfortunately is
16 going to cost more. That is the reality of the world
17 that we all live in, not just tenants, landlords; all of
18 us, that's where we are right now.

19 Here though, New York State, and I would ask those
20 that I listened to prior to this call, you need to step
21 up. Increase voucher amounts. Build more affordable
22 housing for those that really, truly need it. Look at
23 all the development going on around us, all the luxury
24 buildings. There needs to be a better balance with the
25 State stepping up to provide more housing options to

1 tenants in need.

2 New York State needs to stop constantly strangling
3 the neck of the small landlord of rent-stabilized
4 buildings, as we are at our breaking point. As I said at
5 the beginning of my presentation, I'm a good landlord, a
6 small landlord. And there are a lot of us, a lot of us
7 who take our tenants safety and well-being to heart and
8 very seriously. If changes are not made to the current
9 formulas for IAIs and MCIs, you will lose us.

10 I thank you for your time.

11 MR. PASCAL: Thank you. Now we'll have Sue
12 (phonetic) (indiscernible).

13 (Audio missing)

14 MR. STECKER: Okay, Deputy Commissioner.

15 MR. PASCAL: Westchester.

16 MR. PASCAL: Thank you, Deputy Commissioner. We
17 have Philip Weiden.

18 MR. PHILIP WEIDEN: Hi. I'm Philip Weiden from The
19 Building & Realty Institute, the Government Affairs
20 Director. I want to clarify and correct a couple of
21 points.

22 A lot of people are lumping in every landlord
23 together. The vast majority of landlords are hard
24 working and good people who want to make a living like
25 everybody else. We didn't hear about any tenant stories,

1 of which I have many, where a tenant was not acting in
2 good faith.

3 As we know, the vast majority of tenants are good,
4 law-abiding people, just like the vast majority of
5 landlords. But instead of this, we just are hearing
6 demagogic rhetoric. What we need to do are solutions.
7 Lifting some requirements, such as parking requirements
8 on new construction would help bring down the cost of
9 building. Building materials are through the roof.

10 One common thing that's been hit on is that people
11 are facing ever-rising rents. That's true, but you have
12 to look at median versus mean and mode. The average
13 rents are skewed by a few at the top who are charging a
14 lot higher rents than most landlords. Most landlords who
15 are in buildings that are dozens and hundreds of years
16 old are not charging this type of amount.

17 When I was a tenant and would look for housing, my
18 landlord did not, "jack up" my rents hundreds of dollars
19 a month. That actually never happened in any housing I
20 lived in, regardless of whether I lived in Brooklyn or
21 Long Beach or other areas.

22 I also want to correct a few things. Currently
23 evictions -- according to the New York State Unified
24 Court System, evictions are below 2019 levels. So
25 nobody's being thrown out on the street as claimed.

1 Landlords are not able to just suddenly jack up
2 their prices. This has been another myth.

3 Another one is that we're warehousing apartments.
4 While I can't speak for New York City, our vacancy rate
5 is 3.6 percent. We're not jacking up apartments here --
6 jacking up rents. We're not putting rents on the market
7 and warehousing them. And for us to be lumped in with
8 another area is patently unfair, as usually happens when
9 anything happens regarding real estate, regardless of who
10 it is.

11 I would also point out individual apartment
12 improvements, and even legislators who supported this, do
13 agree that individual apartment improvements need
14 adjusting. 15,000 is unrealistic in New York real
15 estate -- \$15,000 for anything and putting a price cap is
16 unrealistic.

17 If you ask any Main Street economist, whether
18 they're on the right, the left, or the center, including
19 Paul Krugman of the New York Times, who said rent control
20 is not a good idea and a good way to keep people in their
21 homes, 15,000 is an artificial cap that will keep housing
22 conditions deteriorating further. We want to improve
23 things.

24 So we support the Housing Access Voucher Program.
25 This program is a new rent-stabilized voucher that would

1 help both rent-stabilized and unstabilized people afford
2 their rent. It would be independent of Section 8 so
3 would be funded entirely by New York State.

4 We support higher vouchers for everybody, including
5 building more housing. In fact, we have no problem
6 endorsing more money for public housing to fix those
7 repairs. We think more of this should be funded through
8 the State. That would be great. What we don't favor is
9 a one-size-fits-all one solution that harms us.

10 The other issue is the two percent MCI which has
11 been brought up. MCIs are an issue. When MCIs have been
12 capped, they're not going to do big, major improvements
13 on buildings that have MCIs. We've seen in the news
14 massive fires that have happened, massive problems with
15 buildings, and they typically happen because of things
16 like the MCI.

17 When you limit the amount somebody can charge to
18 recoup their investment, they're not going to want to
19 invest in the building. Nobody wants to keep their
20 apartments vacant; it's the financial choice for some
21 landlords that have to do that.

22 Small landlords most of all, which have mortgages --
23 and they're not getting their mortgages capped -- they
24 have to pay that. This is economic reality. But by
25 limiting the number of apartments you can build, you are

1 artificially pushing up rents and deteriorating the
2 housing stock.

3 Finally, my final point, as somebody who's studied
4 housing conditions across the world, for about 40 years
5 in Tokyo, believe it or not, the city and the country
6 allows an unlimited number of housing units to be built.
7 What has this done? This has stopped massive increases
8 in rent above inflation, because you can build units
9 large, small, or medium size. There's not the parking
10 requirements that we require here.

11 So I urge you to consider these necessary changes,
12 including potential tax abatements for small landlords,
13 including the Housing Access Voucher Program, which both
14 the tenants and the landlords support. So we are doing
15 proactive solutions, but a one-size-fits-all attack on
16 landlords is patently unfair.

17 You've heard from landlords today who have a few
18 hundred apartments or a few dozen apartments. But
19 artificial economic caps don't work. And just because it
20 might feel good, doesn't make it true. We saw the advent
21 decades ago of bringing the MCIs and bringing HIAs and
22 allowing looser regulations on this, because in the '60s
23 and '70s and the '80s, we all remember the Bronx's
24 burning. We all remember the housing conditions that
25 brought this.

1 So what do we do to fix it? We know what works:
2 higher housing vouchers, less regulation on building, and
3 we often see legislators here speaking who say that they
4 want to lower housing costs but then speak against
5 housing in their own neighborhood. And this is really a
6 shame.

7 So thank you so much.

8 MR. STECKER: Thank you.

9 MR. PASCAL: We have one person in Yonkers. He
10 wanted to do -- I think it says Eddie Thomas (phonetic).
11 Eddie Thomas? Teddy (phonetic)? Oh, okay. Teddy
12 Thomas.

13 Then Teddy, you're up next.

14 MR. STECKER: Okay, thank you. We have Ken Nielson.

15 MR. KEN NIELSON: Yes. All right. My name is Ken
16 Nielson. I am a landlord in Yonkers and have a number of
17 buildings that basically provide affordable housing in
18 Yonkers.

19 The proposed changes, as a result of these
20 regulations and the HSTPA, will have a long-term effect
21 of discouraging the investment in rent regulated multi-
22 family housing. There will only be a deterioration in
23 the housing, stock, and loss of especially of affordable
24 housing units.

25 The purpose of the rent regulations as stated in the

1 ATPA is to prevent rent gouging. But it's not just to
2 keep rents as low as possible to the detriment of the
3 investment of the building.

4 I want to talk about IAIs, Individual Apartment
5 Investments. The regulations should encourage IAIs to
6 provide safe and attractive apartments for tenants to
7 rent at a reasonable level without rent gouging.

8 Regulations mention the fair market rents. We're
9 not talking up here about \$9,000 apartments, as some
10 other people have mentioned in New York City. We're
11 talking about things that are on the -- that are around
12 the fair market rents as listed by HUD.

13 The formulas in the STPA do not allow these low rent
14 apartments to rise to a reasonable level upon vacancy.
15 These rents for long-term tenants are frequently below
16 the operating cost and way below the HUD fair-market
17 rents. The rent law still states that the objective of
18 the law is to allow rents to rise to market.

19 The basic formulas for rent adjustments change from
20 $1/40$ and $1/60$ to $1/68$ and $1/88$, a factor of 420 percent
21 for buildings of less than 35, and 313 percent for
22 buildings over 35. The return now is not sufficient to
23 make the needed improvements. And these formulas, which
24 are drastic changes, were revised when the inflation rate
25 was 1 and 2 percent. Now it's 8.5 percent.

1 The limit of \$15,000 for apartment renovations
2 indicates a lack of understanding of what is required to
3 properly renovate an apartment. Some apartments -- and I
4 have some of these -- require new bathroom, sometimes
5 two; new kitchen, including floors, cabinets, appliances;
6 new wiring throughout the apartment to bring it up to
7 current code. These are apartments that people have been
8 in for 40 years, and I have an example of one. New
9 sheetrock on all walls, new boltings of doors, new front
10 door, new intercom, new windows. You can't do this for
11 \$15,000.

12 And when I talked to some legislators about this in
13 Westchester, I said, where'd you get these numbers? They
14 make no sense. And they said, we got them from the HCR.
15 And I said, gee, what do they know about what it costs to
16 develop -- to renovate an apartment? And that's up in
17 Westchester as opposed to Manhattan South and 96th
18 Street.

19 These kinds of renovations can't be done for
20 \$15,000, even for a one-bedroom apartment. For example,
21 I've got an apartment that's renting now -- or was
22 renting for about \$700. The lady had been there for 40
23 years. She passed away. It needs everything, all the
24 things I mentioned above. And it just makes no sense to
25 invest that amount. So I don't even know to do with this

1 apartment.

2 Some of the other people have talked about
3 warehousing, that these are warehousing. I don't think
4 that's a proper term. I think it's a result of a bad law
5 that discourages investment in housing. Come up with
6 another name, because I think things need to be changed,
7 and some legislators recognize that.

8 And the limit of \$15,000 applies to all apartments,
9 whether in a studio or an eight-room apartment. And I've
10 got studios, and I've got eight-room apartments, and I've
11 got other apartments that are the size of a small house.
12 You can't even get started for \$15,000 in those kinds of
13 apartments. The law needs to be changed to reflect
14 apartment size, one-, two-, three-, and four-bedroom.

15 The HSTPA also makes this rent adjustment temporary
16 for 30 years. This is an investment that should have a
17 reasonable return. Landlords have other investment
18 alternatives that must compete with the investment in an
19 apartment. If we invest something in a New York State
20 bond, keep the bond for 30 years, at the end of 30 years,
21 we still own it. We don't have to give it back. This
22 temporary adjustment is another thing that will
23 discourage dishonorable investments and improvements.

24 The language regarding the licensed contractor is
25 too vague. It is clear that the electrical and major

1 plumbing work and structural work should require licensed
2 contractors and installing appliances should not. But
3 it's not clear whether most of the work, such as
4 installing sheetrock, moldings, kitchen, and bathroom
5 cabinets and fixtures, floors, doors, windows, painting,
6 and material purchase directly requires licensed
7 contractors. If these do require licensed contractors,
8 you are increasing the cost of improvements, while
9 placing a \$15,000 cap on the work.

10 Unless this is changed, it's just going to result in
11 less improvements to the apartment. I don't think that's
12 what you want. I would suggest the following language:

13 Use of a licensed contractor is required for
14 electrical wiring, major plumbing work, and structural
15 work. Other work such as installing sheetrock, moldings,
16 kitchen, bathroom cabinets, fixtures, floors, doors,
17 windows, and painting, material purchased directly does
18 not require a licensed contractor.

19 I would like to have a situation where we know what
20 the rules are so we can follow them, as opposed to
21 leaving a vague thing and then finding out five years
22 later that it wasn't correct.

23 It is increasingly difficult for contractors,
24 especially small contractors that are used in individual
25 apartment improvements in New York State to obtain

1 insurance, which is required for the license; because of
2 the Scaffold Law, which the legislature refuses changes.
3 Many insurance companies have stopped writing policies in
4 New York State because of the Scaffold Law, which has
5 driven up premiums and made it impossible for some
6 contactors to obtain insurance at all. And I think the
7 legislature needs to deal with this issue that they've
8 ignored for years.

9 Thank you very much.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Deputy
11 Commissioner.

12 Good afternoon, everyone. I'm (indiscernible)
13 Brooklyn now, and I'm a member of Housing Justice for All
14 and the Council on Housing (indiscernible).

15 I'm here to tell you my story.

16 MR. PASCAL: Nassau County? James? All right.
17 We'll go to Westchester. Peter?

18 MR. STECKER: Hi, Deputy Commissioner. We have one
19 speaker here, Howie Ravikoff. I've been asked to wait
20 until the screen shows up on your end.

21 MR. PASCAL: I can see you.

22 MR. STECKER: Okay. Great.

23 MR. HOWIE RAVIKOFF: Good afternoon. My name is
24 Howie Ravikoff. I'm a small landlord in Westchester.
25 Please recognize that. Small landlords are not the large

1 landlords we've been hearing about today. Westchester is
2 unique and distinct from New York City.

3 The HSTPA laws of 2019 are killing the small
4 landlord in Westchester. They're killing the old stock,
5 the rental housing that we all need, that we're all
6 referencing here today.

7 The proposed revisions to these laws that you're
8 considering further accelerate the problem my colleagues
9 have been describing to you this morning -- this
10 afternoon, and you've heard about now for months, if not
11 years, since these laws were passed in 2019.

12 I was hoping the revisions you reviewed today would
13 retract some of what was passed in 2019. I was hoping
14 you'd be considering revisions to the HSTPA laws that
15 would give something back to the struggling landlords
16 like myself and the other people in this room.

17 We are desperately trying to keep up. We are
18 desperately trying to provide the housing to a segment of
19 this population that has few options. We understand the
20 plight of the tenant you are all trying to protect. We
21 are right alongside that tenant. We are not fighting
22 that tenant. We are fighting to maintain those units.

23 I was hoping to see a restoration of the vacancy
24 allowance; not 20 percent. I'm sure most of you are
25 laughing at me now. We'd like to something that's tied

1 to the number of years a previous tenant was in that
2 unit. I was hoping to see an increase in the individual
3 apartment improvements, at the very least, a spread for
4 different sized units. The amount of money one needs to
5 spend to renovate studio is simply not the same amount of
6 money needed to renovate a one-bedroom, a two-bedroom, a
7 three-bedroom, and so on.

8 Have you consulted with electricians and plumbers
9 and general contractors? Have you consulted with cabinet
10 makers as to what the real price is of a new set of
11 cabinets for a kitchen in a one-bedroom apartment? Or
12 are you solely looking at information that's being
13 provided to you, that you may or may not trust, or that
14 may or may not be accurate for Westchester versus Nassau
15 versus New York City? And it may not be the same for a
16 small landlord in Westchester as it is for a behemoth in
17 New York City.

18 At the absolute minimum, I was hoping you'd
19 recognize that \$15,000 in 2019 does not have the same
20 value as it does today. Similarly, an apartment
21 renovation in 2019 can't cost nearly the same as it costs
22 today. Inflation isn't the only factor. Please, please,
23 use common logic.

24 As you review today's proposed changes to the 2019
25 laws, I'm wondering who you're really consulting with.

1 Have you met with engineers who understand the life of a
2 hardwood floor or a Hypalon roof or a boiler burning
3 Number 2 oil to produce steam heat in a two-pipe system?
4 Do you know what a landlord has to consider when a cast
5 iron tub starts to show rust? Are you speaking with real
6 estate professionals that can appraise the value of
7 property and the bankers who approve loans based on those
8 appraisals? I think you need a team of professionals you
9 trust.

10 I'd really like you to give some thought to how one-
11 sided this topic has been over too long a period of time.
12 I'd really like you to give some thought as to how
13 narrow-minded these laws are. We all know what happens
14 when any single group of people has power in this country
15 and completely ignores the others.

16 I'm a landlord. I know by that definition most of
17 you don't trust me. I hope you can find professionals
18 with licenses that you can trust. I'll trust them as
19 well. I hope you can consult with them and find a better
20 balance, because today the HSTPA laws and the revisions
21 that you're considering are imbalanced, and they're
22 destroying our housing, and they're deteriorating the
23 housing stock and the quality of life we all want for the
24 segment of renters here in Westchester County.

25 Thank you.

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Good afternoon, Deputy
2 Commissioner. We have no (indiscernible).

3 MR. STECKER: Hi, Deputy Commissioner. We have no
4 further speakers at this time.

5 MR. PASCAL: Julius Bennett (phonetic)? Julius
6 Bennett? Judith Douglas (phonetic)?

7 MR. STECKER: There's still nobody here new signed
8 up.

9 MR. PASCAL: (Indiscernible).

10 [END RECORDING]

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C E R T I F I C A T I O N

The prior proceedings were transcribed from audio files and have been transcribed to the best of my ability. I further certify that I am not connected by blood, marriage or employment with any of the parties herein nor interested directly or indirectly in the matter transcribed.

Laurel Panday

Signature

Date November 21, 2022

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