



Office of the City Clerk

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Legislation Text

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RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Each year in the City of Chicago, hundreds of residential demolitions are conducted in our neighborhoods to houses that contain hazardous building materials no longer in use in modern houses; and

WHEREAS, When a residential demolition is done improperly or the debris from the demolition is not removed in a timely fashion, dust particles from the demolition containing these dangerous and deadly pollutants like asbestos or lead can migrate and affect nearby neighbors; and

WHEREAS, To protect the public from the potentially harmful effects of contaminants released by building demolitions, demolitions are subject to environmental regulations outlined in the Municipal Code of Chicago and enforced by the Department of Public Health; and

WHEREAS, Despite these environmental regulations, many residential demolition projects carry out their work in violation of the City's safeguards, potentially exposing the neighboring residents to harmful contaminants; and

WHEREAS, A recent article by WBEZ found a lack of oversight and enforcement against bad actors, illustrated by the fact that in 2017, while over 1,200 demolition permits were issued by the City, only 50 citations were issued for improper removal of debris, and of those 50 citations issued, only 5 led to a fine; and

WHEREAS, The same article reported that in 2017, the Department of Public Health issued only one citation that led to a fine to a contractor who failed to minimize dust during a demolition or renovation; and

WHEREAS, The harmful effects of hazardous building materials has been well-documented and is well-known-with asbestos leading to diseases like mesothelioma, dust implicated in respiratory issues, and the ingestion of lead leading to developmental delays in children-this lack of oversight by the City regarding residential demolitions is putting our residents and the workers of these demolition projects in serious risk; and

WHEREAS, It is the legal obligation of the Department of Public Health to work diligently to regulate and monitor air pollution sources, and protect the air the citizens of Chicago breathe; and

WHEREAS, The City of Chicago and the Department of Public Health should consider how to more effectively enforce the environmental regulations in place for residential demolitions including sending inspectors to demolition sites while the demolition is in progress to ensure that the best practices for a residential demolition are being followed; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, assembled this 17th day of January, 2018, do hereby call upon Dr. Julie Morita, the Commissioner of Public Health, or Assistant Commissioner Dave Graham to appear before the City Council Committee on Health and

Environmental Protection to discuss the problem of harmful dust particles from residential demolitions in Chicago and provide information regarding procedures in place and used by the Department to enforce the licensing and environmental requirements for a residential demolition.

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