



OFFICE OF THE BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT

**City Council
Housing and Buildings Committee
Testimony of Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams
Wednesday, March 14, 2018**

Good morning Chair Cornegy and the New York City Council Committee on Housing and Buildings. Thank you for the opportunity to testify at today's hearing on New York City's Fiscal Year 2019 executive budget.

Brooklyn is home to 2.6 million residents representing the largest population by county in not only the City of New York but also the entire state. In addition, Brooklyn is home to over 1,021,747 housing units and as Brooklyn continues to grow, it is ever important to ensure that we are creating and promoting housing that is representative of all Brooklynites covering all income spectrums.

As borough president, housing has been an important focus of my administration as the demand for affordable and high quality housing consistently ranks as a top issue for residents.

According to the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), there were 8,921 new units of affordable housing constructed in 2017 and 14,336 affordable housing units were preserved. Though this represents some progress in closing out fiscal year 2017, we know that more needs to be done.

I am convinced that more needs to be done to address the threats to affordable housing in real-time through data driven policy formulation.

This past week, as part of the New York City Open Data Week, my office held a demonstration of our new BrooklynSTAT dashboard platform which aggregates different, shared data sets from government, the non-profit sector, academia, and elsewhere, into a data commons, allowing data analysts to share and cross-collaborate to address chronic societal problems. To kick-off this demonstration, we activated previously untapped Housing Court data and overlaid it with data from our community partners like Heat Seek, Justfix.NYC, OpenGov, and Benefit Kitchen to give us an example of how to correlate affordable housing threats in the borough. While this data commons was focused on Brooklyn, Brooklyn Borough Hall does not have the capacity to manage such large datasets and encourages HPD to review this model and build off our initial success to bring this tool citywide. My office is eager to work with HPD to discuss how to make this a reality as well as grow a partnership with Housing Court so HPD analysts can potentially access this transformative data as well.

In addition, one area where we have seen substantial evidence of harassment against rent stabilized and controlled tenants is through heating harassment. Last year, my office partnered with the non-profit Heat Seek NYC. Heat Seek NYC, a former New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) BigApps winner, focuses on building low-cost, web-connected temperatures sensors to help tenants prove serious and persistent lack of heat in their apartments. Heat Seek has been a tremendous partner with us and we are expanding our partnership work with other rent stabilized housing tenants as well as some NYCHA.

The New York City Council has an ideal opportunity to build off this nascent partnership to further deploy sensors to residents living with bad-acting landlords. This is why I'm calling on the Council to include \$100,000 for a heat sensor demonstration project to be included in HPD's enforcement toolbox. We must do more to combat heating

harassment throughout New York City and tapping into the civic tech ecosystem is a good place to start.