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**MAYOR BILL DE BLASIO SIGNS FIRST-IN-NATION LEGISLATION FOR COOLING TOWER MAINTENANCE**

*Stringent regulation includes mandatory registration, testing and inspection, and significant penalties for failure to comply*

**NEW YORK** —Mayor de Blasio today signed into law Intro. 866, in relation to regulation of cooling towers. The legislation requires the registration of all cooling towers, annual certification, quarterly inspection, and reporting of increased microbes to the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. The legislation also mandates the disinfection of cooling towers with levels of microbes that pose potential health risks. Violations of registry, certification and inspection requirements are liable for civil penalties up to \$10,000. Failure to disinfect towers with increased microbes are classified as misdemeanors, punishable up to \$25,000. The legislation takes effect immediately, and building owners have 30 days to register their cooling towers. The de Blasio administration, New York City Council, and Governor Cuomo collaborated closely on the policy to ensure consistency in regulation in New York City and across the state.

“The recent Legionnaires’ outbreak has been an unprecedented challenge requiring an unprecedented response,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “But a powerful response is just one piece of the equation. New Yorkers need to be protected from the disease through aggressive preventive action, and this groundbreaking legislation, developed in partnership with the City Council, is exactly that.”

“As we continue to ensure that everyone who is suffering from Legionnaires’ disease gets proper treatment, we must also look to the source of the problem,” said **Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito**. “Thanks to this law, cooling towers in New York will be tested on a regular basis, cleaned whenever needed, and properly maintained. I’d like to extend my gratitude to Mayor de Blasio, Governor Cuomo, and all my colleagues on the City Council for their cooperation in bringing different levels of government together to address this issue.”

“Today New York City is taking decisive action to prevent future outbreaks of Legionnaires’ disease,” said **Council Member Corey Johnson, Chair of the Council’s Committee on Health**. “By implementing new, common sense regulations for cooling towers, this legislation is a model for states and jurisdictions that are also grappling with the threat of the disease. I want to thank Commissioner Dr. Mary Bassett and the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene for their leadership during this crisis. This bill is also the result of strong leadership from Mayor de Blasio, Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, Council Members Vanessa Gibson, Jumaane Williams and my fellow colleagues in the City Council.”

“We must do everything we can to proactively prevent outbreaks of Legionnaires’ disease, which is why legislation requiring regular inspections and testing of cooling towers is extremely important. Without proper maintenance, cooling towers can accrue an overgrowth of legionella, causing what has proven to be a fatal outcome for far too many New Yorkers. As Chair of the Council’s Housing and Buildings Committee, I am proud to work with our administration to expedite this bill and solve this crisis through a collaborative citywide effort,” said **Council Member Jumaane D. Williams, Chair of the Council’s Housing and Buildings Committee**.

“By requiring the regular maintenance, cleaning, and inspection systems that filter the air we breathe, this City has enacted groundbreaking public health protocols that will protect New Yorkers for years to come. I am thankful to Mayor Bill de Blasio and Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverto for their commitment to fast tracking these important and lifesaving amendments to the building code, to DOHMH Commissioner Dr. Mary Bassett and our health and community outreach officials for their leadership during this trying time, to Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. for his unwavering commitment to the health and wellness of the people of the Bronx, to my fellow co-sponsors – Chair of the Committee on Health, Council Member Corey Johnson and Chair of the Committee on Housing and Buildings, Council Member Jumaane Williams – and to all of my Council colleagues for the work we have collectively done to address the Legionnaires’ epidemic in our city,” said **Council Member Vanessa Gibson.**

“This groundbreaking law is critical because it has the potential to reduce the number and severity of legionella outbreaks and ultimately save lives,” said **Health Commissioner Dr. Mary T. Bassett.** “Cooling towers are not the only places where legionella bacteria live, but they represent a source of particular concern because they are outdoors and can spread legionella-containing mist to the community. The law signed today will identify the location of cooling towers throughout the city and improve our ability to rapidly investigate potential sources of outbreaks. I want to thank the Mayor, the Speaker, and the entire City Council for all their efforts on this law.”

“The Department of Buildings cooling tower tracking system will allow the agency to assist public health officials in investigating cases of legionella,” said **Buildings Commissioner Rick Chandler.** “This legislation, which came about through a successful collaborative effort between the Mayor and the City Council, creates a strong system of accountability that will help ensure building owners are properly maintaining their cooling equipment.”

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