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**RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS PUBLIC HEARING AND SIGNS INTRO 866,
IN RELATION TO THE REGULATION OF COOLING TOWERS**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Welcome to the hearing, everyone. The recent outbreak of Legionnaires' disease was the largest in our city's history, and it presented us with an unprecedented challenge, and we developed an unequally unprecedented response. And as I think everyone knows by now, we remain confident that this outbreak is ending.

But it's not enough to have provided a unprecedented response. We must minimize the odds of any future outbreaks. When it comes to New Yorkers' health, we won't take any chances.

Our mission is protect all New Yorkers for the long run. So we came together with the City Council and with the state to craft powerful legislation.

This law changes the future of how the city of New York contends with this disease. And it served as a model for the new statewide regulations that were just formalized.

Our partnership with the Council was a model of cooperation and productivity and speed in getting this job done. I want to thank everyone at the City Council – Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito and all of her team, and all the council members for the speed and focus they brought to this situation. In less than a month since the outbreak was identified, legislation now passed and will be signed today.

Together, all of us, the City Council, the Mayor's Office, the state – we're all breaking new ground.

Today marks New York City becoming the first major city in the United States to regulate cooling towers so that we can protect against Legionnaires' disease.

As everyone knows by now – we didn't know this in terms of our public discourse a month ago, but now a lot of us know – one of the most common sources of Legionnaires' disease, one of the places where you are likely to find the Legionella bacteria is in cooling towers. And this, of course, was the source of this recent outbreak.

Intro 866 requires the registration, inspection, and disinfection of all existing cooling towers and all new cooling towers that come online. As we speak, there are city workers on the ground throughout the five boroughs identifying every single cooling tower in this city, working of course with building owners and managers, working with real estate organizations, community leaders, elected officials, etcetera. And these city workers are among hundreds – literally hundreds and hundreds of city workers – who, over the last few weeks, participated in this unprecedented response and helped to contain this outbreak.

Our city workers have done a lot in these last few weeks. They deserve our praise. They've done a fantastic job. And all through this process, they got tremendous support from community leaders, elected officials. It was truly a team effort. And that meant everything from inspecting buildings or identifying buildings and inspecting them, treating folks who were sick at our hospitals, particularly at Lincoln Hospital, and obviously all the public

information efforts that were undertaken to allay the fears of community residents, to let them know what they could do, and what signs to look out for.

That is something for this city to be proud of, but we don't look backwards – we look forwards now. And we know that preventative medicine is the best medicine.

This legislation is all about finding and eliminating the Legionella bacteria before it turns into another outbreak.

And building owners who fail to comply with the standards set forth in this legislation will face harsh penalties, and we will enforce the law.

Again, the number one thing we do in government is protect the health and safety of our people. This bill will give us additional tools that will allow us to protect our people.

Today would not have been possible without the strong leadership of Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito; health committee chair – City Council Health Committee Chair Corey Johnson, who put a lot of time and energy and expertise into this effort; the housing and buildings chair, Jumaane Williams, who chaired the hearings that brought us this legislation so quickly; Vanessa Gibson – Council Member Gibson, whose district was hit hard by this outbreak, worked – she worked very, very closely with all of our agencies and played a key role of leadership on the ground. And I also want to thank our OATH commissioner, Fidel del Valle, for his great work leading us to this day with this legislation.

A number of people in this government had a big part in our response and a big part in the creation of legislation – I'd like to introduce two of them, and then we'll hear from the council members as well. First, our health commissioner, Dr. Mary Bassett –

[...]

Mayor: Now, I'm going to say a few words in Spanish, we're going to sign the legislation, we're going to adjourn the hearing, and then I'll be back in a short while to talk to the members of the press.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that, let's sign the legislation.

[Mayor de Blasio signs Intro 866]

This bill is now law.

[Applause]

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