



**Testimony of Carlos Castell Croke
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New York League of Conservation Voters**

**City Council Committee on Environmental Protection
Hearing on Intro 960 and Intro 980
January 26, 2021**

Good afternoon, my name is Carlos Castell Croke and I am the Associate for New York City Programs at the New York League of Conservation Voters (NYLCV). NYLCV represents over 30,000 members in New York City and we are committed to advancing a sustainability agenda that will make our people, our neighborhoods, and our economy healthier and more resilient. I would like to thank Chair Constantinides for the opportunity to testify today.

We all are well aware of the fact that poor air quality leads to poor health outcomes, especially for vulnerable populations like seniors and children. Specifically, concentrations of particulate matter (PM) and ozone (O3) are the compounds of air pollution most associated with health issues like respiratory and cardiovascular diseases. Air pollution is responsible for both a climate crisis and a public health crisis. In fact, according to the World Health Organization, indoor and outdoor air pollution is directly responsible for 1 in 9 deaths worldwide. And asthma is the number one source of school absenteeism in New York City.

There are many actions the City can take to improve air quality and public health but I want to point out two main areas that are relevant to this hearing: cleaning heavy duty fleets and reducing the use of heating oil.

Electrifying heavy duty fleets, such as buses and garbage trucks, is essential to improving air quality. I would also like to emphasize the importance of including NYC's school bus fleet in this transition and making it a high priority for the Council, as children are especially susceptible to developing asthma from exposure to particulate pollution.

To maximize climate and health benefits, priority for this school bus transition should be for fleets that are older, those with high vehicle miles traveled, and those traveling in and around environmental justice communities. For these reasons, NYLCV supports Int.

0455-2018 by Council Member Dromm to speed up the transition to cleaner, safer zero emissions school buses. NYLCV also supports Int. 960 because it will monitor air quality along heavy use thoroughfares, which we think will emphasize the heavy air pollution burden children in low income communities bear and the need to electrify school buses and other heavy duty fleets

We would also like to express our support for Int. 980. Making a push to phase out Number 4 heating oil five years sooner than the current schedule is an easy step in fighting climate change and reducing air pollution.

A large portion of indoor and outdoor air pollution comes from the burning of dirty heating oils in our buildings. Although Number 6 home heating oil was phased out of 6,000 buildings by the end of 2015 as part of the NYC Clean Heat program, other buildings all around New York City are still burning Number 4 heating oil, which releases large volumes of fine particulate matter into the air. Additionally, the use of Number 4 heating oil disproportionately occurs in neighborhoods of lower socioeconomic status, therefore contributing to environmental injustice in NYC.

The emissions released from burning Number 4 heating oil are correlated with higher frequencies of cardiovascular disease, respiratory illnesses such as asthma and bronchitis, and death.

The current schedule for phasing out Number 4 heating oil from residential buildings-- January of 2030-- is not aggressive enough: accelerating the deadline to 2025 is a step the city can take to accelerate meeting the air quality goals spelled out in OneNYC as well as providing incentives for new heating technology, beneficial electrification and energy efficiency. Just this five year difference could mean averting hundreds of deaths and thousands of emergency room visits but must be coupled with support to enable a transition to clean heating.

NYLCV is proud to have worked with the City Council over the years on policies that improve air quality and public health, and we hope to continue that work by encouraging the passage of Intros 960 and 980.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.