



**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL  
COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS  
September 17, 2026**

Good morning Chair Thomas-Henry and members of the Small Business Committee.

My name is Matthew Bauer, and I am testifying today on behalf of the New York City BID Association, which represents the 78 Business Improvement Districts across all five boroughs that support neighborhood commercial corridors, small businesses, property owners, workers, and communities.

The BID Association appreciates the Council's continued focus on storefront businesses and the health of our commercial districts. BIDs see firsthand both the opportunities and challenges facing storefront businesses. While many corridors have rebounded since the pandemic, entrepreneurs continue to face rising operating costs, labor shortages, and evolving technology and consumer behavior.

**Commercial Lease Regulation - Intro. 90**

Over the years, the City Council has considered various ways to assist businesses through the regulation of commercial leases. Generally speaking, the BID Association supports common-sense protections for lessees and property owners, including greater transparency in commercial leasing, but opposes any form of prescriptive commercial rent control. Our concern is that any form of commercial rent control could have a chilling effect on investment in New York City's commercial properties and ultimately hurt the very businesses we are trying to protect.

As we stated in 2021, the last time a version of Int. 90 was heard by the Council, the BID Association supports efforts to improve transparency in commercial leasing, including written leases and clear disclosure requirements. However, while Int. 90 does not establish traditional commercial rent control, some aspects of the bill move beyond transparency and into the regulation of lease terms and renewal processes. We have significant concerns about any mandatory renewal mechanism at prescribed rates.

The legislation describes its provisions as creating a "Storefront Business Bill of Rights." We believe it is worth noting that the City has already taken meaningful steps to establish and protect the rights of business owners. Local Law 14 of 2023 created a "Business Owner Bill of Rights," establishing protections for businesses during City inspections. In addition, legislation addressing harassment of commercial tenants by property owners was strengthened in 2020.



Rather than adding increasingly prescriptive requirements governing the economic terms of private commercial leases, we believe the City should build upon these existing protections and focus on measures that provide businesses with useful information and access to assistance.

For example, we would support requiring that every commercial lease offering include clear notice of the City's Commercial Lease Assistance Program operated by the NYC Department of Small Business Services. Such a notice could state:

\*"Your business may be eligible for free legal services associated with the negotiation of your lease from the NYC Department of Small Business Services' Commercial Lease Assistance Program. Details & eligibility requirements are available at [\\*https://nyc-business.nyc.gov/nycbusiness/business-services/legal-assistance/commercial-lease-assistance-program](https://nyc-business.nyc.gov/nycbusiness/business-services/legal-assistance/commercial-lease-assistance-program)."

This would provide prospective commercial tenants with information about an existing City resource at precisely the point when it may be most useful—before they enter into a lease—while avoiding government regulation of negotiated lease economics.

The BID Association believes it is important to strike a balance: protecting small businesses while preserving investment in neighborhood commercial properties and maintaining flexibility for both tenants and landlords. In our 2021 testimony, we also urged the City to pursue practical solutions such as regulatory reform, stronger support for SBS and BIDs, better storefront vacancy data, incentives to preserve long-standing businesses, and the creation of a legacy business support program. We are encouraged that some of those recommendations have begun to take shape.

## **Legacy Business Registry and Preservation Fund - Intro 874**

We are particularly pleased to see the Council consider legislation establishing a Legacy Business Registry and Preservation Fund through Intro 874. In our 2021 testimony, we specifically recommended creating a legacy business support program and incentives that would help property owners retain long-standing neighborhood businesses. We are happy to see those concepts reflected in the legislation before you today, and we thank Council Member Maloney for introducing it.

Across New York City, legacy businesses serve as anchors of our commercial corridors. They contribute to local economic activity, neighborhood identity, and cultural character. Helping these businesses remain in place can benefit not only the businesses themselves, but also property owners, residents, workers, and communities.



At the same time, we believe several aspects of the proposed program warrant further consideration to ensure that it is practical, equitable, and capable of helping businesses before they are at immediate risk of displacement.

**First**, the legislation should establish a clear and meaningful threshold for what constitutes a “legacy business.” New York City has thousands of independently owned small businesses that have operated for 20 years or more. Virtually all of these businesses can reasonably argue that they have provided jobs, occupied a storefront, served customers, and contributed to the history and character of their communities. The City should therefore consider whether 20 years is sufficiently distinctive to justify a special designation and limited public resources. For comparison, San Francisco’s legacy business program uses a 30-year threshold, while the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission generally deals with buildings that are at least 50 years old when considering landmark eligibility.

**Second**, we are concerned about the nomination process. Requiring a business to be nominated by an elected official could create an unintended “beauty contest,” particularly when designation may make a business eligible for a \$500-per-full-time-employee grant. We would encourage the Council to establish objective, transparent eligibility criteria and a process through which qualified businesses can apply directly, rather than relying primarily on political nomination.

**Third**, the legislation provides that grants to businesses would be available when there is a “significant risk of displacement.” It should be clarified how these business grants are coordinated with the grants this legislation would provide to property owners offering leases to legacy businesses. We believe the two forms of assistance should work together to encourage long-term agreements and maximize the likelihood that a legacy business actually remains in place.

**Fourth**, the proposed designation process appears potentially lengthy for a program intended to save businesses that may be facing an imminent lease expiration or displacement. A nomination by an elected official, followed by review by SBS, the Community Board, and the Landmarks Preservation Commission, could take considerable time. We encourage the Council to consider an expedited pathway for businesses facing an immediate threat to their continued operation.

**Fifth**, the legislation establishes a Legacy Business Preservation Fund to be funded through appropriations, but does not provide guideposts regarding the level of funding necessary to make the program meaningful. The Council should consider establishing a funding framework or minimum appropriation target so that the program does not become a designation without sufficient resources to actually preserve businesses.

**Finally**, we question the role contemplated for the Landmarks Preservation Commission in determining legacy business designations. The LPC has substantial expertise in architectural and



historic preservation, but the preservation of a business's use, economic viability, employment, and relationship with its surrounding commercial community is a different area of expertise. The Council should consider whether SBS, Community Boards, or other entities with direct knowledge of commercial districts would be better positioned to evaluate these factors.

These concerns do not diminish our support for the underlying goal. We strongly support the creation of meaningful tools to preserve long-standing businesses, but we believe the program should be designed so that it is objective, accessible, adequately funded, and capable of responding quickly when a business is actually at risk.

### **Additional Considerations & Conclusion**

We greatly appreciate the Council's focus on ensuring vibrant storefronts across New York City. The BID Association has always been active on the issue of storefront vacancies and would like to be a partner to the administration and Council on this issue. While storefront vacancy data is not easily tracked over the long-term, a recent report by the NYC Comptroller found that current storefront vacancy rates (11%) are comparable to pre-pandemic levels (10.5%), indicating that the city has stabilized post-pandemic. With increasing conversation about property tax reform, the council should also be cautious about any legislation that would impact the assessed values of commercial properties. We thank the Council for considering our testimony.



**OFFICE OF THE BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT**

**ANTONIO REYNOSO**

Brooklyn Borough President

**City Council Committee on Small Business**

**Testimony on Intro 578**

**September 16, 2026**

Good afternoon, Chair Thomas-Henry and thank you for holding this hearing today and for your advocacy on behalf of NYC's industrial businesses. I am representing Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso to provide testimony on Intro 578, which would reform the City's Industrial Business Zone (IBZ) Boundary Commission.

While BP Reynoso feels that convening the Commission is too risky at this time for reasons I will explain, he does support the changes proposed in Intro 578. This bill will help protect industrial businesses by adding Commission members to be appointed by the Speaker and the Public Advocate and requiring more considerations to inform any proposed boundary change.

Some background: Mayor Bloomberg designated 21 IBZs across the city in 2006 with the goal of supporting and preserving industrial businesses. This designation included associated tax incentives and a commitment not to rezone land within the IBZs from manufacturing to residential.

However, recent administration proposals such as DCP's NYC Industrial Plan and SBS's Business Solutions Centers RFP have left industrial businesses and the non-profits that support them fighting to keep their land and their funding. In negotiations over the Industrial Plan, DCP referred to the IBZs as "tax zones" only, and in their original draft proposed rezoning swaths of the IBZs for mixed use (including residential). Meanwhile, SBS is threatening to defund the critical Industrial Business Solutions Providers (IBSPs) who work with businesses in all 21 of the IBZs.

These policies are short-sighted because the industrial sector plays a critical role in the Mayor's economic justice goals. Manufacturing generally provides living wages with low barriers to entry: the majority of the city's manufacturing jobs belong to people of color, and 70% of the city's industrial workforce has less than a bachelor's degree, compared to 45% of the city's overall workforce. Industrial jobs account for roughly one-quarter of all jobs in NYC paying above \$50,000/year, despite representing only 15% of total employment, highlighting their outsized role in creating accessible pathways to the middle class. Manufacturing jobs also tend to be resilient to technology changes such as AI, and they provide an opportunity for us to create green jobs locally to support climate resiliency.

Yet rezoning changes across the city have led to a 5% decrease in land zoned for manufacturing since 2010, equivalent to a loss of 1522 acres or 1122 football fields. This has contributed to a high demand for manufacturing space, with a vacancy rate around 4.6%, compared to 12% for retail or 23% for office space.

**Our goal then should be to strengthen the IBZs and secure protections for industrial jobs.** We don't need the IBZ Boundary Commission to do this. We can and should achieve it through zoning change. DCP created new Manufacturing zones in City of Yes for Economic Opportunity that would provide stronger protections than current zoning allows. However, DCP has yet to map them. Borough President Reynoso calls on this administration to codify the IBZ protections promised in 2006 by mapping these zones within all existing IBZ boundaries. The administration must also fund the IBSPs to continue their critical work supporting industrial businesses. Their local knowledge, industry expertise, and relationships with the business community cannot be replaced by a citywide contract.

Thank you again for your attention to this issue and advocacy for industrial retention. Borough President Reynoso looks forward to continued partnership with the Council on this work.

Dear New York City Council Members and Speaker Menin,

My name is Lisa Sorin, and I am the President of the Bronx Chamber of Commerce. The Bronx Chamber is dedicated to supporting and advocating for small businesses and local entrepreneurs across the borough. Thank you to the Council for your continued engagement and collaboration with the small business community on issues that impact affordability, stability, and economic growth.

I am submitting this testimony in support of Int. 0408, which would establish a pilot program to match small businesses with social media content creators for assistance with marketing and advertising. I first want to extend my thanks to Councilmember Riley, who has shown continued leadership and dedication to supporting New York City's entrepreneurs and helping small businesses thrive.

Although many entrepreneurs are eager to engage more effectively on social media, oftentimes they lack the resources, expertise, or time to do so alone. Through the Small Business Resource Network, the Chamber has seen this firsthand. For example, programs such as AI training in partnership with Google and a website creation service have been among our most popular programs, demonstrating a growing eagerness to engage and advertise digitally.

Council Member Riley's legislation represents a crucial step in bridging the digital divide for our small businesses. It has the potential to deliver real, measurable impact by increasing foot traffic for storefronts, bolstering neighborhoods, supporting job creation, and fostering media literacy and marketing ability among the small business community. It also positions New York City as a national leader in policies that leverage the creative economy to advance local economic development.

Overall, we encourage the Council to advance and adopt Intro 0408-2026. We also stand ready to work with the Council and SBS in ensuring this program reaches as many small businesses as possible. Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for your ongoing commitment to supporting New York City's entrepreneurs and small businesses.

**Written Testimony**  
**New York City Council Committee on Small Business**  
**Submitted on behalf of Randy Peers President & CEO, Brooklyn Chamber of**  
**Commerce**  
**September 16, 2026**

Dear Chair Thomas-Henry and members of the Committee on Small Business,

We submit this written testimony in support of **Intros. 0408** and **0874** which would benefit Brooklyn businesses. The Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce is among the largest and most influential business advocacy organizations in New York, having spent the last hundred years developing and promoting policies that drive economic development and advance its members' interests. We are the voice of Brooklyn's business community, offering the promotion, support and advocacy businesses need to continue creating jobs and opportunities in their communities.

The Brooklyn Chamber supports **Intro 0408**, which would require the Department of Small Business Services (SBS) to create a pilot program that matches social media content creators with local small businesses. Small businesses consistently tell us that reaching new customers remains one of their greatest challenges. That is why New York City's Chambers of Commerce launched the Open + Online Program in 2021 to help small businesses build a stronger digital presence by providing no-cost website or e-commerce builds, logo and branding design, and expert search engine optimization consulting so local entrepreneurs can reach customers online and grow revenue. Since 2021, Open + Online has helped nearly 1,200 businesses become more competitive in the digital marketplace. Our Open + Online program costs approximately \$1,000 per business and yielded much greater returns. A modest investment can not only help small businesses improve profitability but also can support local economic development. The success of this program is shown by the wait list; there are more than 1,0000 small business owners who have registered an interest in training.

Many local entrepreneurs are eager to engage more effectively on social media, but lack the resources, expertise, or time to do so alone. An SBS program such as this one would help bridge that gap, build upon the Open + Online program, and create endless potential for their business growth.

This bill has the potential to deliver real, measurable impact: increasing foot traffic for storefronts, strengthening neighborhoods, supporting job creation, and fostering digital literacy and marketing capacity among the small business community. It also positions New York City as a leader in policies that leverage the creative economy to advance local economic development.

**Re: Intro 0874 – Establishing a Legacy Business Registry and Preservation Fund**

The Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce supports **Intro 0874** which would establish a Legacy Business Registry to recognize businesses that have operated in New York City for at least 20 years and contributed to the history and character of a community. Brooklyn has many businesses that qualify and we support their recognition. We also support the Legacy Business Preservation Fund which would award grants to Legacy Businesses and property owners who offer a 10-year lease to a Legacy Business, when Legacy Businesses are facing a risk of displacement. This is the type of support Brooklyn businesses need and long standing institutions in our community should be recognized and supported as they navigate an environment of rising costs, inflation, and changing consumer spending habits.

Too often, our businesses are recognized when they are at risk of closing. This bill would provide financial assistance for businesses and would be an important new tool for the City to preserve institutions that have invested in our communities.

We urge the Council to support these bills and thank you for your time and consideration.

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September 16, 2026

Testimony by Linda M. Baran, President & CEO of  
the Staten Island Chamber of Commerce to  
the New York City Council Committee on Small Business

Dear Chair Thomas-Henry and Members of the Small Business Committee,

The Staten Island Chamber of Commerce represents nearly 700 businesses across Staten Island, the overwhelming majority of which are small enterprises with ten or fewer employees. Our members face rising costs, arduous municipal regulations, and fiscal pressures among other challenges that threaten the viability of small businesses in New York City. We appreciate the Council considering legislation that addresses some of these challenges.

**Re: Int 0090 – Storefront Premises Lease Agreements**

The Staten Island Chamber of Commerce opposes this bill. We appreciate the goal of providing greater stability for small business tenants, but we are concerned about additional mandates on the leasing process and creating a blanket approach to negotiations between tenants and property owners. Requiring specific renewal processes and lease extensions that limit rent increases could have unintended consequences for the businesses this legislation is intended to help. Also, many small business owners are also small property owners. Establishing artificial limits on commercial rents and a challenging regulatory framework for small property owners to deal with will further challenge the economic viability of many Staten Island businesses.

We commend the intent to lower the cost of doing business in New York City and to maintain bustling commercial corridors. However, we believe that offering targeted support to help businesses rather than instituting a new, blanket framework makes more sense. Direct cost reduction strategies such as reduced real estate taxes and targeted supports like legal assistance are better methods to lower rent costs and support small businesses and property owners.

**Re: Int 0408 - Pilot Program Matching Social Media Content Creators with Small Businesses**

The Staten Island Chamber supports this Intro. 408, which would require the Department of Small Business Services (SBS) to create a pilot program that matches social media content creators with local small businesses. Many local small businesses and entrepreneurs are eager to engage more effectively on social media, but lack the resources, expertise, or time to do so alone.

Small businesses consistently tell us that reaching new customers remains one of their greatest challenges. That is why New York City's Chambers of Commerce launched the Open + Online Program in 2021 to help small businesses build a stronger digital presence by providing no-cost website or e-commerce builds, logo and branding design, and expert search engine optimization consulting. Open + Online helped small businesses reach more customers, become more competitive, and boost revenue. Demand for the Open+Online program is strong. An SBS program such as this one would help bridge that gap, build upon the Open + Online program, and create endless potential for their business growth.

This bill has the potential to deliver real, measurable impact: increasing foot traffic for storefronts, strengthening neighborhoods, supporting job creation, and fostering digital literacy and marketing capacity among the small business community. The Staten Island Chamber supports Intro 408 and encourages the Chambers to work with the Chambers of Commerce to implement a successful program.

#### **Re: Intro 0874 – Establishing a Legacy Business Registry and Preservation Fund**

The Staten Island Chamber of Commerce supports Intro 874 which would establish a Legacy Business Registry to recognize businesses that have operated in New York City for at least 20 years and contributed to the history and character of a community. Staten Island has hundreds of businesses that qualify and we support their recognition. We also support the Legacy Business Preservation fund which would award grants to Legacy Businesses and property owners who offer a 10-year lease to a Legacy Business, when Legacy Businesses are facing a risk of displacement. This is the type of support Staten Island businesses need and long standing institutions in our community should be recognized and also supported as they navigate an environment of rising costs, inflation, and changing consumer spending habits

Too often, our businesses are recognized when they are at risk of closing. This bill would provide financial assistance for businesses and would be an important new tool for the City to preserve institutions that have invested in our communities.

Thank you for considering our perspective.

REBNY | September 16, 2026

## The Real Estate Board of New York to The New York City Council Committee on Small Business Regarding Intro. Nos. 90 and 874

The Real Estate Board of New York (REBNY) is the City's leading real estate trade association representing commercial, residential, and institutional property owners, builders, managers, investors, brokers, salespeople, and other organizations and individuals active in New York City real estate. REBNY thanks the committee for the opportunity to testify regarding New York City's storefront retail sector and Intros. 90 and 874.

In recent years, storefront leasing activity has been driven by mom-and-pop businesses rather than larger chain retailers, particularly in food and beverage. A 2024 [report](#) from the Department of City Planning found that local retailers selling experiences – whether it be dining, event spaces, or bakeries – are replacing goods retailers who are facing increased pressure from changing consumer behavior and online retail. At the same time, however, many of the new businesses opening are small mom-and-pop entrepreneurs. According to a recent [analysis](#) by the City Comptroller, of the approximately 96,500 storefronts occupied by small businesses in early 2020, 84% either continued to house the same small business or had been replaced by another small business.

While certain neighborhoods are experiencing above average vacancy rates, and certain corridors have pockets of long-term vacancy, the overall market is healthy. According to the [Comptroller](#), approximately 15,700 of the City's 142,000 storefronts were vacant as of April 2026. The citywide vacancy rate was 11.0%, down from 11.6% in late 2023 but still somewhat above the 10.5% rate at the beginning of 2020. REBNY's most [recent retail report](#) similarly shows conditions that vary substantially by corridor. Asking rents increased in eight of 16 Manhattan corridors during the first half of 2026 and availability continued to tighten in several of the strongest areas, although asking rents remain below their 2016 highs.

This success is a testament to the fact that more often than not, owners work with their tenants to help both parties succeed. Successful owners and tenants work in partnership as lease expiration approaches to make the best decision possible for both sides. Owners do not walk away from viable tenants and work collaboratively with their tenants to support their long-term success. Indeed, it is more costly for an owner to lose a quality tenant as the owner faces costs of lost rent, turnover expenses, and the cost of building out the space for the next tenant.

At the same time, not all businesses will succeed, and there are many reasons a storefront business fails, especially in a costly and highly regulated market like New York City. Rent is one factor, but businesses also face rising utility, insurance, labor, and financing costs, taxes, permitting delays and changing consumer demand. DCP's 2024 analysis also illustrates some of these differences as retail corridors facing the greatest challenges tended to be in central businesses districts where foot traffic had not fully recovered from the pandemic, while more retailers were opening in residential neighborhoods that gained daytime activity from remote and hybrid work.

These differences matter because City policy should help small businesses enter leases with better information and reasonable protections without making it harder for the next business to get their chance. REBNY therefore supports provisions of Intros. 90 and 874 that require written leases and reasonable notice, improve disclosure and model leases, strengthen assistance for small businesses and recognize successful long-term businesses. However, provisions in Intro. 90 allowing a tenant to extend a lease after the parties have failed to agree on renewal terms would go considerably further and could make owners less willing to rent to newer or riskier businesses in the first place.

**BILL:** Intro 90

**SUBJECT:** A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to lease agreements concerning storefront premises

**SPONSORS:** Council Members Brewer, Louis, Brooks-Powers, Hanif, Aldebol, Schulman, Wilson, Maloney, Fariás, and Epstein.

REBNY supports clear written leases, reasonable advance notice, accessible model documents, and legal counseling for storefront tenants. However, Intro. 90 goes beyond those objectives by prescribing the outcome when parties cannot agree on renewal terms. REBNY therefore opposes the bill as drafted and recommends a narrower approach focused on sharing information, providing predictability, and voluntary dispute resolution rather than giving a tenant the unilateral right to extend the lease for up to a year.

Aspects of this bill will help to create a more balanced and transparent process for owners and tenants. Specifically, there is merit to requiring clear written leases for longer-term storefront tenancies and giving businesses adequate notice about whether an owner intends to offer a renewal. Intro. 90 would generally require a written lease for storefront tenancies longer than one year and would establish a process beginning 120 days before expiration if the parties have not already agreed on a renewal.

The bill would also require the Department of Small Business Services (SBS) to make model commercial leases available in multiple term lengths and translate them into the City's designated languages. This is a valuable provision as a small business owner should not have to become an expert in commercial real estate law simply to understand the basic terms of a lease.

The disclosure provisions are also generally reasonable, although the requirement to project certain future costs should be reviewed. The legislation would require an owner to provide historical information on utilities, insurance, real property taxes, commercial rent taxes, BID assessments and other costs, along with the reasonable expected average cost of those expenses for the following two years.

Historical expenses and how future costs will be allocated are useful information for a potential tenant. However, predicting what those costs will be two years later can be complicated. For instance, if a restaurant is replacing a clothing store, the insurance and utility costs will be dramatically different. Further, those costs can change for reasons neither party controls, and the legislation should not create a new dispute pathway because an estimate made when the lease was signed later turned out to be wrong.

While these provisions are meritorious, Intro. 90 proceeds to go much further. For leases longer than one year, the bill gives a tenant the unilateral right to extend the existing lease for as much as one additional year if the parties have not reached an agreement 30 days before expiration, subject to several conditions. The bill would then prescribe the rent during that extension, generally allowing an increase of between 7% and 10% depending on when the owner provided notice. Similar requirements would apply to shorter leases.

Giving a business enough time to prepare for lease expiration makes sense. Requiring the parties to continue the lease after they have been unable to agree on new terms is a different policy that fundamentally limits the ability of an owner to control their property, hurts the ability of new businesses to open, and can allow businesses that are either no longer viable or serving the needs in their community to linger.

It also changes the calculation before a lease is signed. If taking on a tenant also means accepting a greater risk that the tenancy cannot end when the negotiated lease expires, an owner has more reason to focus on creditworthiness, operating history and financial capacity at the beginning. That could make an established national tenant relatively more attractive than a new restaurant, retailer or first-time entrepreneur.

Given these concerns, a modified bill should adhere to the following principles:

- *Increase disclosure:* Ensure that potential tenants are fully aware of the property history and prior costs and can work with the owner to understand potential future costs, where warranted.
- *Preserve notice without mandating outcomes:* Support adequate advance notice of lease expiration but remove provisions that compel lease extensions and prescribe rent when the parties cannot agree. Mandatory extensions may cause owners to prioritize established, well-capitalized tenants over new restaurants, retailers, and first-time entrepreneurs.

- *Target intended beneficiaries:* Limit eligibility to independently owned or small businesses rather than defining coverage principally by the location and configuration of the premises.
- *Make enforcement proportional:* Provide an opportunity to cure good-faith administrative violations and calibrate penalties to the conduct and actual harm, rather than tying liability to the assessed value of the entire property.
- *Enhance City supports:* A City-created model storefront lease and enhanced services for small businesses can help more small local businesses open their doors.

We look forward to working with the Council on these reforms.

**BILL:** Intro 874

**SUBJECT:** A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to establishing a legacy business registry and preservation fund

**SPONSORS:** Council Members Maloney, Louis, Thomas-Henry, Cabán, Riley, Sanchez, Krishnan, Avilés, Hanif, Epstein, Hankerson, Santosuosso, and Morano.

Intro. 874 would allow SBS to designate a business as a legacy business if it has operated in New York City for at least 20 years and has significantly contributed to the history, identity or character of its neighborhood or community. The bill would also establish a preservation fund, subject to appropriation. A qualifying business at significant risk of displacement could receive an annual grant of \$500 per full-time employee, up to 100 employees. A property owner could receive \$4.50 per square foot, up to 5,000 square feet, after entering into or extending a lease with the legacy business for at least 10 years.

REBNY supports this legislation.

The advantage of this structure is that it does not require either party to accept a particular lease. Instead, the City is providing an incentive where an owner and business can reach a mutually beneficial agreement that they otherwise might not have reached.

An incentive model with optional participation is a successful model instituted in other cities with similar retail and built environment challenges. San Francisco has operated a legacy business program for years and currently provides incentives to landlords that enter into long-term leases with registered legacy businesses. Portland completed a major review of legacy-business policies earlier this year and recommended a program combining formal recognition with technical assistance, succession planning, dedicated staff support and financial assistance.

Those examples also help show where Intro. 874 could be further refined to encourage participation:

- *Simplify access to the registry:* Allow businesses to apply directly to SBS rather than requiring nomination by an elected official.

- *Invite supporting evidence:* Permit elected officials, Community Boards, BIDs, chambers, and other community organizations to nominate businesses or submit letters supporting an application.
- *Use preservation review selectively:* Give SBS discretion to consult the Landmarks Preservation Commission when an application involves a landmark, historic district, or related preservation issue, rather than requiring LPC review for every applicant.

The program does not need to preserve every business that reaches 20 years. However, where a long-standing business provides meaningful value to a neighborhood, faces a real risk of displacement and can remain through a modest City incentive tied to a voluntary agreement, there is a reasonable case for assistance. With a simple application process, Intro. 874 could provide a useful and targeted way to help those businesses remain in their communities.

Thank you for your consideration of these points.

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REBNY | September 16, 2026

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This success is a testament to the fact that more often than not, owners work with their tenants to help both parties succeed. Successful owners and tenants work in partnership as lease expiration approaches to make the best decision possible for both sides. Owners do not walk away from viable tenants and work collaboratively with their tenants to support their long-term success. Indeed, it is more costly for an owner to lose a quality tenant as the owner faces costs of lost rent, turnover expenses, and the cost of building out the space for the next tenant.

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These differences matter because City policy should help small businesses enter leases with better information and reasonable protections without making it harder for the next business to get their chance. REBNY therefore supports provisions of Intros. 90 and 874 that require written leases and reasonable notice, improve disclosure and model leases, strengthen assistance for small businesses and recognize successful long-term businesses. However, provisions in Intro. 90 allowing a tenant to extend a lease after the parties have failed to agree on renewal terms would go considerably further and could make owners less willing to rent to newer or riskier businesses in the first place.

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Aspects of this bill will help to create a more balanced and transparent process for owners and tenants. Specifically, there is merit to requiring clear written leases for longer-term storefront tenancies and giving businesses adequate notice about whether an owner intends to offer a renewal. Intro. 90 would generally require a written lease for storefront tenancies longer than one year and would establish a process beginning 120 days before expiration if the parties have not already agreed on a renewal.

The bill would also require the Department of Small Business Services (SBS) to make model commercial leases available in multiple term lengths and translate them into the City's designated languages. This is a valuable provision as a small business owner should not have to become an expert in commercial real estate law simply to understand the basic terms of a lease.

The disclosure provisions are also generally reasonable, although the requirement to project certain future costs should be reviewed. The legislation would require an owner to provide historical information on utilities, insurance, real property taxes, commercial rent taxes, BID assessments and other costs, along with the reasonable expected average cost of those expenses for the following two years.

Historical expenses and how future costs will be allocated are useful information for a potential tenant. However, predicting what those costs will be two years later can be complicated. For instance, if a restaurant is replacing a clothing store, the insurance and utility costs will be dramatically different. Further, those costs can change for reasons neither party controls, and the legislation should not create a new dispute pathway because an estimate made when the lease was signed later turned out to be wrong.

While these provisions are meritorious, Intro. 90 proceeds to go much further. For leases longer than one year, the bill gives a tenant the unilateral right to extend the existing lease for as much as one additional year if the parties have not reached an agreement 30 days before expiration, subject to several conditions. The bill would then prescribe the rent during that extension, generally allowing an increase of between 7% and 10% depending on when the owner provided notice. Similar requirements would apply to shorter leases.

Giving a business enough time to prepare for lease expiration makes sense. Requiring the parties to continue the lease after they have been unable to agree on new terms is a different policy that fundamentally limits the ability of an owner to control their property, hurts the ability of new businesses to open, and can allow businesses that are either no longer viable or serving the needs in their community to linger.

It also changes the calculation before a lease is signed. If taking on a tenant also means accepting a greater risk that the tenancy cannot end when the negotiated lease expires, an owner has more reason to focus on creditworthiness, operating history and financial capacity at the beginning. That could make an established national tenant relatively more attractive than a new restaurant, retailer or first-time entrepreneur.

Given these concerns, a modified bill should adhere to the following principles:

- *Increase disclosure:* Ensure that potential tenants are fully aware of the property history and prior costs and can work with the owner to understand potential future costs, where warranted.
- *Preserve notice without mandating outcomes:* Support adequate advance notice of lease expiration but remove provisions that compel lease extensions and prescribe rent when the parties cannot agree. Mandatory extensions may cause owners to prioritize established, well-capitalized tenants over new restaurants, retailers, and first-time entrepreneurs.

- *Target intended beneficiaries:* Limit eligibility to independently owned or small businesses rather than defining coverage principally by the location and configuration of the premises.
- *Make enforcement proportional:* Provide an opportunity to cure good-faith administrative violations and calibrate penalties to the conduct and actual harm, rather than tying liability to the assessed value of the entire property.
- *Enhance City supports:* A City-created model storefront lease and enhanced services for small businesses can help more small local businesses open their doors.

We look forward to working with the Council on these reforms.

**BILL:** Intro 874

**SUBJECT:** A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to establishing a legacy business registry and preservation fund

**SPONSORS:** Council Members Maloney, Louis, Thomas-Henry, Cabán, Riley, Sanchez, Krishnan, Avilés, Hanif, Epstein, Hankerson, Santosuosso, and Morano.

Intro. 874 would allow SBS to designate a business as a legacy business if it has operated in New York City for at least 20 years and has significantly contributed to the history, identity or character of its neighborhood or community. The bill would also establish a preservation fund, subject to appropriation. A qualifying business at significant risk of displacement could receive an annual grant of \$500 per full-time employee, up to 100 employees. A property owner could receive \$4.50 per square foot, up to 5,000 square feet, after entering into or extending a lease with the legacy business for at least 10 years.

REBNY supports this legislation.

The advantage of this structure is that it does not require either party to accept a particular lease. Instead, the City is providing an incentive where an owner and business can reach a mutually beneficial agreement that they otherwise might not have reached.

An incentive model with optional participation is a successful model instituted in other cities with similar retail and built environment challenges. San Francisco has operated a legacy business program for years and currently provides incentives to landlords that enter into long-term leases with registered legacy businesses. Portland completed a major review of legacy-business policies earlier this year and recommended a program combining formal recognition with technical assistance, succession planning, dedicated staff support and financial assistance.

Those examples also help show where Intro. 874 could be further refined to encourage participation:

- *Simplify access to the registry:* Allow businesses to apply directly to SBS rather than requiring nomination by an elected official.

- *Invite supporting evidence:* Permit elected officials, Community Boards, BIDs, chambers, and other community organizations to nominate businesses or submit letters supporting an application.
- *Use preservation review selectively:* Give SBS discretion to consult the Landmarks Preservation Commission when an application involves a landmark, historic district, or related preservation issue, rather than requiring LPC review for every applicant.

The program does not need to preserve every business that reaches 20 years. However, where a long-standing business provides meaningful value to a neighborhood, faces a real risk of displacement and can remain through a modest City incentive tied to a voluntary agreement, there is a reasonable case for assistance. With a simple application process, Intro. 874 could provide a useful and targeted way to help those businesses remain in their communities.

Thank you for your consideration of these points.

**CONTACT:**

**Zach Steinberg**

*Executive Vice President, External Relations and Advocacy*

Real Estate Board of New York

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# NYC HOSPITALITY ALLIANCE

September 16, 2026

## **Testimony of the NYC Hospitality Alliance on Int. 0090-2026 Lease agreements concerning storefront premises**

On behalf of the NYC Hospitality Alliance, a nonprofit trade association representing thousands of restaurants, bars, and nightlife establishments across New York City, we respectfully submit testimony regarding Int. 0090-2026.

Commercial leases are among the most consequential agreements a restaurant or bar owner enters into, and the terms, costs, condition of the premises, and renewal process can have a significant impact on a business's ability to open, operate, and remain in a neighborhood.

The Alliance is generally supportive of the bill's goals of improving transparency, communication, and predictability in the commercial leasing process, particularly for small and independent businesses.

We support efforts to provide prospective tenants with clearer information before entering into a lease, including available information regarding certificates of occupancy, building violations, prior construction, operating expenses, taxes, assessments, and other costs associated with a space. Greater transparency can help business owners better understand their obligations, anticipate costs, and make more informed decisions before making significant investments in a storefront.

We also support improved communication between property owners and commercial tenants, as well as the development of model commercial leases and plain-language resources through the Department of Small Business Services.

As the Council continues to consider this legislation, we encourage implementation that is clear, workable, and focused on providing transparency, proper protections and useful information to small businesses.

We appreciate Council Member Brewer for her attention to these issues and for her continued efforts to support New York City's small businesses. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.



**New York City Hospitality Alliance**  
*info@thenycalliance.org | [www.thenycalliance.org](http://www.thenycalliance.org)*

**Testimony to the New York City Council City Council Committee on Small Business in  
Support of Int 408  
Amaurys Grullo, Co-founder and CEO of Bronx Native  
September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2026**

Good afternoon, Chair Thomas-Henry and members of the New York City Council Committee on Small Business.

My name is Amaurys Grullon. I'm a Bronx-born creative social entrepreneur, content creator, and co-founder and CEO of Bronx Native.

I started Bronx Native in 2015 with a mission to change the narrative of the Bronx. What started as a clothing brand has grown into a cultural platform, retail space, creative hub, and community that uses storytelling to uplift our borough and the people and businesses in it.

A huge part of that growth has come through social media and content creation. Platforms like TikTok have allowed us to tell our own story, reach thousands of people beyond our neighborhood, bring customers into our business, and create opportunities that we simply would not have had access to otherwise.

But I also see firsthand that many amazing small businesses across the Bronx and New York City don't have the time, resources, or know-how to effectively tell their stories online.

That is why I strongly support Council Member Kevin Riley's Intro 408.

Connecting local businesses with content creators can be extremely powerful. Creators understand how to tell stories, reach audiences, and turn online visibility into real-world attention. For a small mom-and-pop business, that can mean new customers, increased foot traffic, greater sales, and ultimately keeping their doors open.

And this benefits creators too. It creates paid opportunities for local talent to use their skills while investing directly back into their own communities.

I've seen the power of content firsthand, not only through growing Bronx Native, but also by using our platform to highlight other local businesses and organizations across our city.

New York City has incredible entrepreneurs and incredible creators. Intro 408 gives us an opportunity to connect the two and strengthen our neighborhoods in the process.

I respectfully urge the Council to support Intro 408.

Thank you for your time.



306 Atlantic Ave | Brooklyn NY 11201  
www.atlanticavebid.org

September 14, 2026

NYC Council, Committee on Small Business

Statement on Intro. 874 - (Maloney)– A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to establishing a legacy business registry and preservation fund.

The Atlantic Avenue Business Improvement District (BID) provides direct services and advocacy for businesses and residents in the Atlantic Avenue corridor in the vibrant Brooklyn neighborhoods of Brooklyn Heights, Cobble Hill, Boerum Hill, and Downtown Brooklyn. We thank Councilmember Virginia Maloney for centering our city's legacy businesses through this legislation and we enthusiastically welcome a city-based legacy business registry and preservation fund. Several American cities already have legacy business listings: Atlanta, Boston, Denver, Detroit, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and San Antonio—but New York was doing business before all of them, as the eldest city of this list.

Atlantic Avenue is home to some of NYC's oldest and most beloved legacy businesses, such as Sahadi's, Damascus Bakery, and the Long Island Bar. We actively utilize the existing New York State Business Preservation Registry and last year, thanks to Senator Andrew Goundares, we listed Tripoli Restaurant (1968) and hosted a press conference and community celebration inside the restaurant. This fall, we hope to do the same with Montero Bar (1939). These listings attract press and new customers into the businesses, giving them a new lease on life.

In addition to potentially providing displacement relief, is it possible to expand the grant funding to preserve character defining features of the legacy business? Specifically, if these items are listed on the required description to the commission of how the business "...intends to maintain traditions that define the business and that create a positive impact on the neighborhood or community in which the business is located." Many historic businesses are also located in historic buildings, in which physical preservation is also a concern. For example, supplemental funding for the highly-specialized maintenance of Montero's 90 year old neon sign, which has become an iconic symbol of Atlantic Avenue would be a good use of the grant funding.

One other tweak to the bill as proposed is changing the 20 year criteria to 30 years. As the bill proposes to consult with the Landmarks Preservation Commission around eligibility for listing, it makes sense to use New York City's established 30 year criteria for the age of eligible resources to be landmarked. Much younger than the Federal Government's 50 year criteria, the 30 year mark for landmarking has proven to be innovative because it includes the recent past.

Kelly Carroll  
Executive Director, Atlantic Avenue BID

**Testimony of Joanne Podell**  
**Executive Vice President, Cushman and Wakefield**  
**September 16, 2026**

Good afternoon, Chair Thomas-Henry and members of the Committee. My name is Joanne Podell, and I am a commercial real estate broker with extensive experience working with retailers, small businesses, and property owners across New York City.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Intro 90.

New York City's retail market is strong, and much of that activity is being driven by small and independent businesses. Successful retailers are renewing their leases often in advance of the lease expiration.

Owners and tenants are continuing to work together and reach agreements that allow businesses to grow and invest in their neighborhoods. It often becomes a partnership. In my decades I often see businesses and owners reach agreement on any issues that may arise during their lease term. I am confident in saying that owners do not walk away from successful businesses.

So, I support the Council's goal of protecting small businesses and improving transparency. However, I have concerns that some provisions of Intro. 90 will do the opposite.

Specifically, the mandatory lease extension could delay the next generation of small businesses. New restaurants, retailers, and job creators need storefronts to open and grow. As neighborhoods also change over time, the types of businesses that serve them also change.

When a lease reaches the end of its agreed-upon term, it could offer the opportunity for a new business that better meets the needs of local residents. Automatically extending the existing lease for another year could stand in the way of that natural turnover.

And knowing that the tenant has this right could also make owners less willing to take a chance on a new or growing entrepreneurial business. Landlords are likely to favor tenants with an established operating history and proven track record.

Thank you for your time and consideration of these points.

**Testimony of Steven Soutendijk**  
**Vice Chair, Cushman & Wakefield**  
**September 16, 2026**

Good afternoon, Chair Thomas-Henry and members of the Committee. My name is Steve Soutendijk, and I am a commercial real estate broker specializing in the New York City retail market.

I would like to focus my on remarks on Intro. 90.

I support, like most of the commercial brokerage community, reasonable transparency and protections for small businesses in the leasing process. But Intro 90's mandatory one-year lease extension could introduce significant uncertainty into a market that serves tenants and owners alike.

First, this proposed legislation is being introduced at a time when New York City's retail market is thriving. Small businesses are opening and expanding, available space has declined along many prime retail corridors and tenant's rents remain below pre-pandemic levels in many parts of the city.

Second, owners already have strong incentives to reach agreements that retain successful, reliable tenants. Replacing a tenant means marketing the space, paying brokerage costs, negotiating a new lease, and accepting the risk that the storefront may remain vacant. I have seen time and time again that an owner will work with a proven tenant who has been there for years rather than start over with an unknown business.

Third, commercial spaces are often committed to new tenants months before an existing lease expires. Under this legislation, an existing tenant can unilaterally remain for another year, potentially leaving a new business that has already spent money, hired employees, or planned an opening around a specific date without access to the space. That's not fair and its not good public policy, especially because major global companies could take an extension the same as a small mom-and-pop.

Lastly, this would affect more than property owners. Newer, smaller businesses often lack the financial history or operating experience of established tenants. The uncertainty this mandatory extension would introduce could make owners cautious to lease to them, only making it harder for entrepreneurs to open their doors.

The Council is right to support small businesses and transparency in the leasing process. This can be accomplished without disrupting negotiated leases or creating uncertainty for the small businesses waiting to occupy these spaces.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

# East Village Community Coalition

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September 16, 2026

The East Village Community Coalition has long supported local independent businesses, having produced printed and online storefront guides since 2006; worked with SBS to form the East Village Merchants Association; served on MBP Brewer's Retail Task Force in 2019 (leading to the inclusion of storefront vacancy information on annual DOF filings); and collaborated on the report *Crisis and Adaptation - East Village Storefront Survey 2021*. The East Village Storefront data is currently being updated, and should be ready to share later this fall.

In my role at the EVCC, and as a board member of the Lower East Side Initiative (LESPI), we are working to map legacy businesses on the LES and assist them in their efforts to be nominated for the [State Historic Business Registry](#). We appreciate CM Brewer's tireless work on small business initiatives, and have great interest in CM Maloney's Intro 0874-2026. New York City absolutely can and should do more for local independent businesses. We look forward to providing comments and suggestions on the legislation on the committee's agenda today, and particularly on Intro 0874-2026.

We're pleased to hear that independent businesses were highlighted as the types of businesses that the legacy business legislation is intended to serve. Looking back to the midtown law firms that qualified for, and benefitted most, from pandemic-era "small business" grants, we believe the criteria for eligibility should be carefully considered, with priority given to the independent storefront micro-businesses that contribute the most to the social fabric of their immediate communities and truly need the most support.

Given that so few of our historic neighborhoods are landmarked, we expect that only a small percentage of twenty-year-old businesses are located in buildings that fall under the LPC's purview. However, if NYC SBS or the LPC are to play any meaningful role in these programs, they must be provided with the funding and expert staff they will need to do so.

We heard several times today about the lack of detailed data on storefront usage, and the reliance on BIDs for detailed information and outreach. Please note that CBOs often have far more detailed data on their local neighborhood businesses than is available in the citywide xyz database, and stand ready to serve as valuable resources to legislators and city agencies on Intro 0874-202 and other small business legislation.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Laura Sewell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Laura Sewell | Executive Director  
East Village Community Coalition



## Testimony of Leah Archibald

Executive Director, Evergreen: Your North Brooklyn Business Exchange  
NYC Council Committee on Small Business—September 16, 2026

Thank you to the Chair and members of the Committee for the opportunity to testify. Evergreen strongly supports Int. No. 578 and its efforts to strengthen the process governing changes to New York City's Industrial Business Zones.

For more than 40 years, Evergreen has worked with manufacturers, fabricators, food producers, construction firms, distributors, and other industrial businesses in North Brooklyn. We have also spent decades watching what happens when industrial land disappears. Here is what we have learned: **industrial land is impossible to replace once it is lost.** North Brooklyn offers perhaps one of the clearest examples in New York City. The 2005 Greenpoint-Williamsburg rezoning removed significant areas from manufacturing use and accelerated development pressure throughout the surrounding industrial neighborhoods. Evergreen's subsequent research found that between 2002 and 2019, North Brooklyn lost approximately 15 percent of its industrial jobs, while office, institutional, and local service employment grew dramatically. It also found that nearly 16 million square feet of manufacturing-zoned land had been converted out of industrial land use—a 25 percent loss.

At the same time, our research demonstrates that preservation works. Within the North Brooklyn Industrial Business Zone, industrial employment actually **increased by 8.8 percent between 2002 and 2019**, and industrial businesses remained the largest source of employment in the area.

IBZ boundaries are not simply lines on a map. They provide businesses, property owners, lenders, and workers with an important signal that the City considers industrial activity valuable and intends to support its continued presence. **We believe that the Administration's promise not to rezone IBZ areas for residential uses was the single most important factor in the stabilization of NYC's industrial real estate.**

The NYC Department of City Planning's Industrial Plan asserts that most industrial jobs are not in industrial neighborhoods, diminishing the necessity of Industrial Business Zones. We strongly disagree. Our disagreement stems from the fact that they are using business headquarters or registered business addresses, not necessarily where industrial activity actually occurs. **This methodology has boosted Manhattan to be the most job-rich borough when it comes to industrial jobs despite having the least actual industrial activity.** Their methodology dilutes the significance of industrial employment in the outer boroughs where the majority of industrial activity takes place. DCP's report states that 48% of NYC industrial businesses citywide are in commercial or residential districts, with 52% (a majority) are located in M or MX districts. They note that only 25% total industrial jobs in Industrial Business Zones, and from



that concludes that industrial businesses are much more geographically dispersed than commonly understood. **However, outer borough strategic planning areas featured in the study have closer to 60% of industrial jobs in M districts and 44% of industrial jobs within IBZs. We believe that these statistics more closely resemble actual industrial activity in NYC.**

The economic value represented by these industrial districts is substantial, as determined by an impact analysis we commissioned HR&A Advisors to conduct. In North Brooklyn alone, industrial businesses support nearly 48,000 jobs and generate approximately \$15 billion in economic activity annually across New York City. These jobs pay average wages of approximately \$107,000—significantly higher than the Brooklyn average—and provide accessible pathways to economic mobility for New Yorkers without four-year college degrees.

NYC industrial businesses operate in one of the most competitive real estate markets in the country. They cannot compete for space on equal terms with residential development, hotels, offices, entertainment uses, and other higher-rent uses. Once industrial land is converted or removed from a protected district, the businesses and jobs that depend on it are extremely difficult to bring back. For that reason, changing an existing IBZ boundary should be a deliberate, transparent process grounded in the actual economic conditions of the district.

**Int. No. 578 makes several important improvements to that process.**

The legislation establishes preservation and growth of industrial and manufacturing activity and employment as the mission of the IBZ Boundary Commission. It broadens representation on the Commission by adding two members appointed by the Council Speaker and one by the Public Advocate. It requires a two-thirds vote to amend or repeal an existing IBZ, while retaining a majority vote for the creation of a new zone.

We particularly support that distinction. Creating a new IBZ and removing land from an existing one are not equivalent actions. Removing land can have irreversible consequences, and requiring broader consensus before doing so appropriately recognizes what is at stake.

We also strongly support the bill's transparency and conflict-of-interest provisions. Commission meetings would be viewable online, meeting materials and minutes would have to be posted within five business days, members would be required to make financial disclosures, and individuals with certain real estate development or land-use consulting interests—as well as registered lobbyists—could not serve on the Commission.

Int. No. 578 provides a clearer framework for evaluating proposed boundary changes. The Commission would specifically consider existing industrial uses, the number of industrial and manufacturing



**EVERGREEN**

Your North Brooklyn Business Exchange

businesses and workers in the area, the potential for future industrial development, residential zoning, freight and traffic patterns, and the relationship to other economic development zones. It would also notify the City Council within five business days after approving an IBZ designation, amendment, or repeal.

Industrial districts are complicated ecosystems. A parcel that appears underutilized on paper may be critical to freight movement, outdoor storage, production, sanitation, construction, distribution, or the operations of neighboring businesses. Decisions about IBZ boundaries therefore need to reflect how industrial districts actually function—not simply the highest-value potential use of an individual property. We recommend that any decision which would diminish IBZ space add an economic impact analysis as part of the framework for evaluating proposed changes.

We agree that New York City needs housing. However, it also needs places where things can be made, repaired, stored, distributed, fabricated, recycled, and delivered. It needs contractors and manufacturers capable of building the infrastructure required for the green economy. It needs space for the businesses that keep the city functioning every day. Those needs should not be pitted against one another through an opaque or easily reversible boundary process. After all, no housing is affordable without a job.

Int. No. 578 does not freeze Industrial Business Zones in place. It creates a higher standard for removing existing protections, requires relevant economic evidence to be considered, broadens participation in the decision-making process, and makes that process more transparent to the public.

Evergreen strongly urges the Council to pass Int. No. 578. We thank Council Member Gutiérrez and the bill's co-sponsors for their leadership and thank the Council for recognizing that preserving New York City's industrial economy requires not only supporting industrial businesses, but protecting the places where those businesses can operate.



## About Evergreen

Since our founding in 1982, Evergreen has evolved alongside the City of New York. We began by improving public safety in industrial areas, then became experts in incentive programs, helping hundreds of businesses grow. When the City created the IBZ program, we were selected to serve North Brooklyn. During the 2008 recession, we partnered with the City to acquire industrial property, and today we operate five buildings—totaling 32,000 square feet—leased below market to small manufacturers to preserve jobs.

In 2025 Evergreen staff served 192 individual businesses. Business clients looked to Evergreen for a wide variety of services; the most frequently requested services by far and away was assistance navigating government. Evergreen assisted 42 businesses with government navigation on 64 different issues. Evergreen was able to help eight local firms apply for 19 different incentives. One hundred thirteen firms received one-on-one assistance from Evergreen staff on more than 203 issues. Seventy-six firms sent 87 attendees to our informational workshops and multi-week seminars.

The businesses we assist are not small in their impact. A recent economic analysis found that the businesses Evergreen served in 2025 support approximately 5,300 jobs across New York City and generate roughly \$1.5 billion in economic activity annually.

The NYC Department of City Planning's Industrial Plan asserts that most industrial jobs are not in industrial neighborhoods. We strongly disagree. The NYC Department of City Planning's Industrial Plan asserts that most industrial jobs are not in industrial neighborhoods, diminishing the necessity of Industrial Business Zones. We strongly disagree. Our disagreement stems from the fact that they are using business headquarters or registered business addresses, not necessarily where industrial activity actually occurs. **This methodology has boosted Manhattan to be the most job-rich borough when it comes to industrial jobs despite having the least actual industrial activity.** Their methodology dilutes the significance of industrial employment in the outer boroughs where the majority of industrial activity takes place.

Sadly, the NYC Department of Small Business Services is using this methodology as a pretext to eliminate the Industrial Business Service Provider program, which accounts for 20% of Evergreen's budget.

**Evergreen's ability to serve North Brooklyn businesses is imperiled by the elimination and defunding of the IBSP program.** Eliminating the IBSP program and its funding weakens the entire ecosystem of nonprofit economic development organizations that extend and amplify the City's investment in working-class job creation. The IBSP program is core infrastructure that allows the industrial sector to function. Organizations like Evergreen are a critical part of the infrastructure that allows this sector to survive in one of the most expensive cities in the world.



The work IBSP organizations do already aligns directly with many of the Mamdani administration's priorities: expanding access to good jobs, ensuring that growth is equitably distributed throughout all communities in NYC, and ensuring that the benefits of the green economy reach historically underinvested communities.

Industrial firms require help navigating zoning and permitting, securing industrial space, accessing specialized financing, complying with environmental regulations, and building workforce pipelines. This work requires deep sector knowledge and sustained relationships built over years. IBSP organizations also serve as the City's most effective pipeline connecting industrial businesses to critical public programs. Because we maintain long-term relationships with hundreds of firms in Industrial Business Zones, IBSPs are often the primary source of referrals for companies accessing city incentives such as the Commercial Expansion Program (CEP) and the Relocation and Employment Assistance Program (REAP). Without IBSP organizations actively identifying and assisting eligible businesses, many small manufacturers simply do not know these programs exist or lack the capacity to apply successfully.

At the same time, Evergreen is actively helping industrial businesses participate in the emerging green economy. Through our Growing Green initiative, we are working with partners to connect Brooklyn's small manufacturers and industrial service firms to opportunities in clean energy, infrastructure resilience, and environmental restoration. These programs are designed to ensure that the transition to a green economy creates opportunities for local businesses and working-class New Yorkers rather than leaving them behind.

This is a true public-private partnership. **City funding enables us to leverage philanthropy, private capital, and earned revenue to deliver far greater impact.** The City's investment allows organizations like ours to mobilize far greater resources on behalf of small industrial businesses, providing better bang for the buck with taxpayer dollars. Just as importantly, we are a trusted messenger—able to reach businesses and connect them to City programs more effectively than the government alone.



**NYC Council Committee on Small Business Hearing  
September 16, 2026  
Testimony on Int. 0578 – IBZ Boundary Commission Reform**

Good afternoon Chair Thomas-Henry and members of the Council,

My name is Nora Lewis and I'm the Business Assistance Manager at the Long Island City Partnership, the local nonprofit economic development organization serving Long Island City. As the Industrial Business Service Provider for Western Queens, we manage both the LIC Business Improvement District and Industrial Business Zone. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

I am here to urge the Council to support the reform of the Industrial Business Zone Boundary Commission.

IBZs are crucial to preserving the city's industrial sector and the 500,000 well-paid jobs it supports, particularly for New Yorkers who are immigrants, people of color, or do not have a college degree. The industrial and manufacturing work done in IBZs is also critical to sustaining key supply chains and a wide network of small businesses across the five boroughs.

As the city's 21 IBZs contend with development pressures, there is a need to ensure the industrial sector continues to have the space, steady workforce, and legislative support to flourish. At the same time, there are portions of the LIC IBZ where there is an opportunity to collocate housing with light manufacturing uses without displacement. This new IBZ model could create a more connected neighborhood in LIC, particularly surrounding Queensbridge Houses.

As every IBZ has nuances and different needs, it's important to have local voices involved in this important decision-making. Expanding membership of the IBZ Boundary Commission, emphasizing transparency, and reaffirming the comprehensive criteria Commission members must consider are paramount to this preservation and strengthening of the industrial sector, while also contending with ambitious housing goals laid out by this Administration.

We urge the Council to support this legislation to ensure New York City retains industrial businesses and fosters future growth. Thank you for your time.



**September 16, 2026**

**Testimony of Sandra Jaquez**

**President**

**New York State Latino Restaurant Bar & Lounge Association (NYSLRBLA)**

*Before the*

**New York City Council Committee on Small Business**

*Regarding*

**Int 408 – Establishing a pilot program to match small businesses with social media content creators for assistance with marketing and advertising**

Thank you, Chair Thomas-Henry and members of the Committee, for the opportunity to provide testimony. The New York State Latino Restaurant Bar & Lounge Association (NYSLRBLA) is a non-profit organization representing the interests of hundreds of Hispanic, minority, and immigrant-owned restaurants and nightlife venues throughout New York City. We strongly support **Int. 0408-2026**, which would require the Department of Small Business Services (SBS) to establish a pilot program matching social media content creators with local small businesses.

We applaud your leadership, and that of the NYC Council, in advancing policies that give small businesses the tools they need to compete and grow. For Latino-owned restaurants, bars, and lounges, reaching new customers in an increasingly competitive marketplace can be a significant challenge. Our members are deeply rooted in their communities and offer unique food, culture, and experiences, but many lack the time, resources, or digital marketing expertise needed to effectively promote their businesses and reach new audiences online.

An SBS pilot program would help address this gap by connecting local small businesses with content creators who can tell their stories, showcase their offerings, and introduce them to new customers. This practical support could deliver meaningful benefits for Latino-owned businesses and the communities they serve by increasing visibility and foot traffic, supporting job creation and local economic activity, and strengthening digital marketing capacity among small business owners.

New York City's Latino restaurants, bars, and lounges are an essential part of the cultural and economic fabric of our neighborhoods. Providing these businesses with accessible tools to reach new customers can help ensure they continue to grow, create jobs, and contribute to vibrant commercial corridors across the City. By connecting the City's small businesses with its growing creative economy, this legislation also presents an opportunity for New York City to lead the way in developing innovative approaches to local economic development.

For these reasons, the NYSLRBLA urges the Council to advance and pass **Int. 0408-2026**. We welcome the opportunity to continue working with the Council and SBS to ensure that this pilot program is designed to deliver meaningful and measurable benefits to the small businesses and hospitality establishments we collectively serve.

Thank you for your continued leadership and dedication to supporting New York City's entrepreneurs, small businesses, and hospitality industry.

Sincerely,

**Sandra Jaquez**

President

**New York State Latino Restaurant, Bar & Lounge Association**



## **Testimony of the Partnership for New York City**

### **New York City Council Committee on Small Business**

#### **Int. 90-2026 – Lease Agreements Concerning Storefront Premises**

**September 16, 2026**

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Thank you, Chair Thomas-Henry and members of the committee, for the opportunity to testify on Int. 90 on lease agreements concerning storefront premises sponsored by Council Member Brewer. The Partnership for New York City mobilizes private sector resources and expertise to advance New York City's standing as a global center of economic opportunity, upward mobility, and innovation. We are a nonprofit organization whose members are preeminent business leaders and companies that support nearly 1 million jobs in New York City and deliver approximately \$370 billion in economic output.

The Partnership believes that the city has a healthy retail market that does not require intervention, making the mandates of Int. 90 unnecessary. Furthermore, although Int. 90 contains certain reasonable provisions, such as requiring a written lease for storefront premises leased for more than one year, we have concerns about the bill's automatic renewal provisions.

#### **The NYC market makes Int. 90 unnecessary**

The rationale for this legislation appears to be the perception that retail vacancies are the result of a market failure that requires government intervention. However, current market conditions do not support that conclusion. Recent data from the New York City Department of City Planning show that the citywide storefront vacancy rate declined to 11.06% in the first quarter of 2026, the lowest level recorded since the onset of the pandemic and nearly the same as the first quarter of 2020.

The recovery is particularly evident in Manhattan. Retail storefront vacancies in Manhattan's prime retail corridors fell to 10.4 percent in the second quarter of 2026, the lowest level on record. At the same time, leasing activity remains robust. The fact that asking rents remain below pre-pandemic peaks is not evidence of market dysfunction; rather, it demonstrates that the market is responding appropriately to changing economic conditions and tenant demand.

The Bronx and Staten Island currently have retail vacancy rates below their pre-pandemic levels, while Queens remains below the citywide average. Although Brooklyn's vacancy rate is somewhat higher than before the pandemic, that increase is concentrated in a handful of neighborhoods (e.g., Ocean Hill, North East New York, North Crown Heights).

The variation in vacancy rates between boroughs do not tell the full story. The Department of City Planning found that storefront vacancies vary significantly from neighborhood to neighborhood and block to block. The Department determined that vacancies are driven by hyper-local conditions rather than any single, citywide cause, and are shaped by both local and citywide

market forces. Given this, a one-size-fits-all regulatory framework is unlikely to address the underlying causes of vacancies where they exist.

**Automatic renewal of leases could have unintentional consequences**

Int. 90 would require that any storefront lease with a term of more than one year be in writing. This is a reasonable mandate and certainly reflects best practices. The Partnership is very concerned, however, about the requirements in the bill that would effectively force landlords to offer lease renewals and, in certain circumstances, permit tenants to extend their occupancy for up to one additional year with rent increases capped at 10%.

While well-intentioned, these provisions interfere with the ability of property owners and tenants to negotiate lease terms that reflect current market conditions and the unique circumstances of a particular property. The bill's one-size-fits-all formula would limit an owner's ability to recover and re-lease their own property, even where the owner has acted in good faith and has already identified a new tenant, which could discourage investment in and improvement of storefront space. The rent-increase caps function as a form of price control tied not to market rent but to the owner's notice timing, which could distort renewal negotiations and create incentives disconnected from the underlying real estate market. Finally, imposing civil penalties based on a percentage of assessed property value, combined with a private right of action, would create substantial litigation exposure for technical or inadvertent non-compliance with a complex, multi-tiered notice schedule.

Given the healthy state of the citywide retail market described above, the Partnership does not believe the record supports overriding privately negotiated lease terms to this degree.

Thank you.



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September 16, 2026

**Written Statement of Patricia Dunphy, Rockrose Development  
To New York City Council Committee on Small Business Regarding Intro. Nos. 90 and 874  
September 16, 2026**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on Intros. 90 and 874.

At Rockrose, we have spent many years working with retail tenants to bring new businesses into our buildings and to keep successful existing businesses in place. From that experience, I think there are useful parts of Intro. 90, but I am concerned that its lease extension provisions could ultimately make it harder for newer and smaller businesses to get space in the first place.

We support clear written leases, reasonable notice before a lease expires, better disclosure, model lease documents and access to legal assistance. Those are practical ways to make the leasing process more transparent and give a small business enough information and time to make decisions.

The problem here is what happens when an owner and tenant cannot agree on a new lease. Intro. 90 would allow a tenant, under certain circumstances, to remain after the agreed lease term has ended, including for as much as one additional year.

In our experience, owners already have every reason to keep a successful tenant. The loss of a good tenant means lost rent and turnover expenses as well as time spent finding a replacement and often significant costs to prepare the space for the next business. If a tenant is doing well and we can agree on terms that work for both sides, we make sure that the tenant stays. Indeed, we and most residential owners promote the businesses to our community to help the retailers.

However, sometimes a renewal does not work. The parties may be too far apart on terms and/or the business may no longer work in the space. A lease has a defined term in part so both sides know when they will have to make that decision.

Changing that certainty also affects the decision at the beginning of a lease. If taking a chance on a new business means accepting a greater risk that the space will not become available when the negotiated lease ends, an owner has more reason to favor a tenant with a longer operating history and stronger credit. Therefore, it will make it harder for the new restaurant, retailer or first-time entrepreneur to secure a lease. The Council will be hurting new business.

I also think the disclosure requirements should distinguish between information an owner actually has and costs that can only be estimated. Providing historical expenses is reasonable. Predicting insurance or utility costs two years into the future is an unreasonable request and will be simply a 'guess'.



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There is a lot the City can do and that we fully support to make commercial leasing easier for small businesses including better information, adequate notice, legal assistance can all help. I would encourage the Council to build on those ideas while preserving the ability of owners and tenants to decide for themselves whether a lease should continue once its agreed term ends.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments.

Sincerely,

---

Patricia Dunphy, Senior Vice President  
Rockrose Development L.L.C.

**Small Business Majority's comments to New York City's Committee on Small Business on  
Int. No. 0090-2026**

Chair Shanel Thomas-Henry and members of the committee,

Thank you for giving us the opportunity today to share our thoughts on the establishment of the "Storefront Business Bill of Rights." My name is Lindsey Vigoda and I am the New York Director at Small Business Majority. We are a national, state and local organization with a mission to empower small business owners to build a thriving and equitable economy.

There is an [estimated](#) 12% storefront vacancy rate across New York City, and nearly 1 in 5 in Manhattan. But I don't have to tell you this statistic for you to know it's true. You see it every day when you walk down the streets of your neighborhood. I certainly do. I am heartbroken to see businesses that have been in my neighborhood for decades pushed out by unfair and unreasonable lease changes and rent increases. Through my outreach across the five boroughs, I hear a resounding plea from small business owners to curb the rapidly inflating and unfair real estate market.

Small businesses are contending with rising costs across all fronts, from product costs to utility bills to healthcare, and of course, to rent. The very shops and restaurants that make your neighborhood a community are being squeezed by their commercial leases.

Currently, there are no protections against a landlord declining to renew a lease with minimal notice, and landlords are under no obligation to negotiate lease renewals in a fair, transparent or in a good-faith manner. It is essential that we establish protections for small business tenants before our neighborhoods become overrun with the only businesses that could afford these risks—chains, big-box stores and private equity establishments.

While Small Business Majority supports this effort as these rights are a strong beginning to the fight for small storefronts, I urge the City Council to go further. Small business owners don't often have the resources to fight a landlord in court or to hire a lawyer to review their leasing agreement. Requiring smart disclosure and fair agreements without giving enforcement power to the Small Business Services or another City department may just continue the pattern of leasing we're already seeing in the city, leading to a need for further action in the future.

Even as Small Business Majority supports the Storefront Business Bill of Rights, I cannot pass up this opportunity to impress upon you that protections aren't enough for small businesses. We need to rein in commercial rent costs. There are many strong initiatives proposed, but I would like to highlight two:

- The Small Business Rent Stabilization Act addresses the displacement and instability of our city's entrepreneurs by reining in inflated commercial leasing. I urge this Committee to support this state bill, showing small business owners in all five boroughs that this city wants them here.
- The other initiative is outlined in the Affordable NYC Now Policy Agenda published in May. Small Business Majority proposed that the city create commercial leasing incentives for landlords to work with small and local businesses in areas that have seen drastic vacancy rates.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continuing this conversation and collaborating to remove barriers to entrepreneurship in our great city.



## **Testimony Regarding Int 90, Int 874, and Int 578**

September 16, 2026

The Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development (ANHD) thanks Small Business Committee Chair Shanel Thomas-Henry, and members of the Committee, for the opportunity to submit testimony on Int 90, Int 874, and Int 578.

### **About the Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development**

ANHD is one of New York City's lead policy, advocacy, and technical assistance and capacity-building organizations. We maintain a membership of 80+ neighborhood-based and citywide nonprofit organizations that have affordable housing and/or equitable economic development as a central component of their mission. We are an essential voice, bridging the power and impact of our member groups to build community power and ensure the right to affordable housing and thriving, equitable neighborhoods for all New Yorkers. We value justice, equity and opportunity, and we believe in the importance of movement building that centers marginalized communities in our work. Across 5 decades and 5 boroughs we have consistently focused on addressing New York's housing affordability crisis, displacement, and economic inequity to build community power.

ANHD's work directly supports the needs of our members who develop, manage, and organize to preserve affordable housing, and who fight to bring equity into low-wealth communities in New York City—especially communities of color. Our groups rely on us for technical assistance and capacity-building resources that allow them to maximize their resources, skills and impact. The support services, research, analysis, public education, and coalition building we do helps to identify patterns of local neighborhood experiences and uplift citywide priorities and needs. Our work translates into the capacity to win new programs, policies and systems that ensure the creation and preservation of deeply and permanently affordable housing, and economic justice.

### **Int 90-2026 (Brewer): Lease agreements concerning storefront premises.**

Int 90, which would make commercial leases and lease renewal options mandatory for retail storefronts, is an important first step in the direction of commercial tenant protection. The rent



increase allowances for lease extensions also act as further protection for commercial tenants who might otherwise be subjected to unreasonable rent increases in their lease extensions. ANHD supports Int 90 and urges the Council to pass a version that would apply broadly to retail and non-retail commercial spaces.

The bill as currently written would apply to premises that are or could be used to sell goods at retail, which excludes industrial businesses and manufacturing spaces. The language of this legislation should be expanded to include industrial businesses. As we detail further below, the industrial sector plays a crucial role in creating a more equitable, thriving, and functioning New York City. At the same time, the industrial sector is facing displacement pressures from increased rents and the reduction of industrially zoned land. These businesses need the same protections that Int 90 would offer to retail businesses and we urge the Council to include them in this legislation.

Within a landscape of rapidly rising rent and a lack of structural protections for commercial tenants, a lease is often the only form of protection available to them. However, according to data from a [2023 ANHD survey](#), one in 10 small businesses self-reported not having a lease. In our experience with members doing small business outreach and merchant organizing, New York City's most marginalized brick-and-mortar businesses frequently do not have leases, leaving them without any legal protection from their landlords and without long-term security for their business. Furthermore, businesses without a lease are often ineligible for grant and loan programs that require documentation.

At the same time, those who have leases are not immune to displacement threats, and favorable lease terms can be difficult to negotiate, especially for immigrant and non-English speaking commercial tenants. The Commercial Lease Assistance (CLA) Program, the city's free program for navigating commercial leasing, is an important resource that we are heartened to see expanded in this year's budget. We urge the City Council to continue to advocate for more resources like the CLA Program so that the impact of Int 90 and the security of a fair lease can reach every single New York City small business.

#### **Int 874-2026 (Maloney): Establishing a legacy business registry and preservation fund.**

ANHD is aligned with the goal of Int 874, which establishes a legacy business registry and preservation fund, and we are excited to support anti-displacement legislation for small businesses. However, we are concerned that Int 874 may have the unintended consequence of favoring certain types of businesses over others. We would like to see legislation that more broadly protects both long-term businesses and also new businesses established by immigrant families, local entrepreneurs, and other New Yorkers. We welcome the opportunity to work with the Council to advance our shared goal of protecting the small businesses that make up the economic and cultural backbone of New York City's neighborhoods.



**Int 578-2026 (Gutierrez): Reforming the industrial business zone boundary commission.**

ANHD supports Int. No. 578 and its efforts to strengthen the process governing changes to New York City's Industrial Business Zones (IBZs).

As a convener of the Industrial Jobs Coalition (IJC), a city-wide coalition of IBSPs, non-profit developers of industrial space, and industrial policy advocates, ANHD and our member organizations have long advocated for increased support for the industrial sector. The industrial sector plays a crucial role in creating a more equitable, thriving, and functioning New York City. Industrial businesses pay higher wages and offer more career opportunities to a workforce that is 67% people of color and 70% of whom do not have a college degree. 33% of all NYC jobs that pay over \$50,000 and do not require a college degree are industrial jobs. Preserving and growing these jobs lies at the heart of a true equitable economic development strategy.

Yet this sector is under constant threat today, including from the shrinking of industrially zoned land. Industrial Business Zones are an essential tool in combating this - supporting the preservation and growth of the industrial sector by providing dedicated areas for such businesses to operate without the threat of a rezoning away from industrial use. Changing an existing IBZ boundary should be a deliberate, transparent process grounded in the actual economic conditions of the district.

Int. 578 makes several important improvements to that process. The legislation establishes preservation and growth of industrial and manufacturing activity and employment as the mission of the IBZ Boundary Commission. It broadens representation on the Commission and it requires a two-thirds vote to amend or repeal an existing IBZ, while retaining a majority vote for the creation of a new zone. It strengthens transparency and conflict-of-interest provisions. And it provides a clearer framework for evaluating proposed boundary changes by explicitly considering existing industrial uses, the number of industrial and manufacturing businesses and workers in the area, the potential for future industrial development, residential zoning, freight and traffic patterns, and the relationship to other economic development zones.

These are all welcome changes to help ensure IBZs continue to play the crucial role they do in supporting the preservation and growth of industrial businesses. Int. No. 578 does not freeze Industrial Business Zones in place. It creates a higher standard for removing existing protections, requires relevant economic evidence to be considered, broadens participation in the decision-making process, and makes that process more transparent to the public. We support this legislation and urge the Council to pass Int. 578.



We are excited to work with the Committee in protecting commercial and industrial tenants across the city and creating a strong small business ecosystem that serves all New Yorkers. Thank you again for the opportunity to submit testimony. If you have any questions or for more information, please contact Gina Lee at [gina.l@anhd.org](mailto:gina.l@anhd.org).



September 16, 2026

**Re:** Removing the Mandatory Right to Renew - Storefront Business Bill of Rights (Int 90)

Dear Chair Thomas-Henry, Council Member Brewer and Members of the New York City Council Committee on Small Business,

On behalf of the Five Borough Jobs Campaign, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on [Int. 90](#), the Storefront Business Bill of Rights.

The [Five Borough Jobs Campaign](#) is a coalition representing businesses of all sizes across the city, including chambers of commerce, business improvement districts, workforce organizations, and economic development groups. Our coalition is guided by the simple belief that New York City thrives when every New Yorker has access to a well-paying job.

Neighborhood storefronts are essential to that goal. They create jobs and help commercial communities thrive. At a time when rising costs and government inefficiencies are making it harder to start and operate a business in New York City, we support common-sense measures that give small businesses more clarity.

**The Storefront Business Bill of Rights gets much of this right.** Its requirements around written notices, greater transparency and specific timeframes for lease negotiations would provide important protections for small businesses. **However, we cannot support this bill as written and urge the Council to amend the legislation's mandatory right-to-renew provisions before moving this bill forward.**

#### WHAT THE BILL GETS RIGHT

For most businesses, having the right information before signing a lease can prevent costly surprises down the line. Requiring written leases and basic disclosures about unexpected violations or other issues would help business owners make informed decisions before committing to a storefront. These are sensible requirements that can make an often complicated process more manageable.

That same principle should apply as a lease approaches its end. Giving a business sufficient notice allows it to negotiate in good faith, prepare for a potential move and make responsible decisions. A minimum [120-day notice period](#) for non-renewals or significant rent increases would help ensure storefront businesses are not caught off guard as a lease approaches expiration.

#### NECESSARY CHANGES

But providing sufficient notice is different from requiring a lease to continue. The bill's mandatory lease-extension provisions would require a property owner to extend a commercial lease beyond its negotiated term while also setting the allowable rent increase during that extension.

This would restrict the ability of businesses and property owners to negotiate terms that reflect their individual circumstances. Not only could that reduced flexibility hurt storefront leasing, it could also create unintended consequences on what businesses get opportunities.

Many commercial property owners are small businesses themselves and face rising operating costs and property taxes. A rigid renewal requirement would make [owners more hesitant](#) to lease to independent businesses in the first place.

As a result, the net impact of this requirement may be increased vacancy and crowding out of local businesses to the benefit of chain stores.

We share the Council's goal of shielding businesses from sudden displacement and uncertainty. But requiring the continuation of a commercial tenancy risks replacing negotiations with a one-size-fits-all mandate. And that would hurt the very businesses this bill aims to support. We strongly encourage the Council to remove the mandatory right to renew, and advance the rest of this bill as a strong protection for storefront businesses in every borough.

We appreciate your attention to this matter and stand ready to work collaboratively with the Council on solutions that will strengthen this crucial piece of legislation.

Respectfully,

The Five Borough Jobs Campaign



**Testimony of the Grand Central Partnership, Inc. before the New York  
City Council Committee on Small Business on Int. 0090-2026 –  
Storefront Business Bill of Rights**

**September 16, 2026**

The Grand Central Partnership (GCP) is a Business Improvement District (BID) serving an approximately 70 square block area in Midtown East surrounding Grand Central Terminal. On a daily basis, we provide supplemental services that support our district's approximately 250 property owners, 800 storefront businesses, and the community at large.

We share the Council's goals of providing greater transparency and protection for small businesses during the commercial leasing process, and we applaud your efforts to strengthen our commercial corridors. In particular, we support the provisions that require written leases and clear disclosure of costs and violations. We also support Councilmember Maloney's efforts to establish a Legacy Business Registry (Int. 0874).

That said, we want to express our concern about the provision in the bill that would allow tenants, under certain circumstances, to unilaterally extend their leases for up to one year after the lease term has expired.

This provision fundamentally changes the nature of a commercial lease. Property owners and tenants negotiate a lease for a defined term, and both sides make business decisions based on the agreed expiration date. When the term ends, both parties should retain the ability to decide whether a new agreement makes sense for them.

A mandatory one-year extension could prevent property owners from moving forward with new tenants, planned renovations, redevelopment, or other plans. It

could also make owners less likely to lease to less established businesses and create fewer opportunities for new entrepreneurs.

We believe the Council can strengthen transparency and protections for small business tenants without granting one party the unilateral right to extend a lease after it has expired. We urge the Council to remove the mandatory one-year lease extension provision from Intro. 90, and to continue working toward a balanced approach that strengthens our city's commercial corridors.

# Testimony in Support of the New York City Small Business Rent Stabilization Act

**Submitted by:** Perri Salka, Owner, The WonderMart

**Business address:** 141 India St, Brooklyn, NY (Greenpoint)

**Submitted to:** New York City Council, Committee on Small Business

**Re:** Support for Resolution 0496-2026, calling on the State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign A.5568A/S.8319, the New York City Small Business Rent Stabilization Act

**Date:** September 11, 2026

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee on Small Business,

My name is Perri Salka, and I am the owner of The WonderMart, a 300-square-foot shop in Greenpoint, Brooklyn that carries small-batch goods from more than 300 independent makers and brands across New York State. I am submitting this testimony in strong support of the New York City Small Business Rent Stabilization Act (A.5568A/S.8319), sponsored by Assembly Member Emily Gallagher and Senator Julia Salazar, and I want to thank the Committee for advancing Resolution 0496-2026 in support of it.

Small, independently owned storefronts like mine are what make neighborhoods like Greenpoint feel like real communities rather than interchangeable commercial corridors. But we operate with almost none of the protections that residential tenants take for granted, and that imbalance is actively pushing small businesses out of the city. I support this legislation because it addresses the core problems I have lived through firsthand as a first-time commercial tenant, and I believe it should go further to close the gaps I describe below.

## What I support in this bill

- **A commercial rent guidelines board with a real cap on annual rent increases**, so small business owners can plan and budget with some certainty instead of being at the mercy of whatever a landlord decides in a given year.
- **A default right to lease renewal for tenants in good standing**, so business owners who pay rent on time and follow their lease terms cannot be pushed out simply because a landlord wants to re-lease at a higher rate or bring in a different tenant.
- **The right to a written lease and common-sense, plain lease language**, so that small business owners — many of whom are signing a commercial lease for the first time, without the benefit of in-house counsel — actually understand what they are agreeing to.

I would also urge the Council and State Legislature to build in explicit protections against hidden fees, unexplained utility charges, and unstandardized tax pass-throughs, which are not clearly addressed in the current bill language but are just as damaging to small businesses as uncapped rent increases. My own experience illustrates why.

## **My experience: a shared electrical meter I was never told about**

When I signed my first lease for The WonderMart, I was not informed that my shop's electrical meter was shared with another, separate storefront in the building. For over two years, I unknowingly paid the full electric bill for two commercial spaces — mine and one that was not even mine — before the shared meter was discovered. No one disclosed this to me at signing, and nothing in my lease flagged it. This should never be legal. Landlords should be required to disclose shared utility meters and any other shared building infrastructure in writing before a lease is signed, and tenants should have a clear, enforceable path to correct billing and recover overcharges once a shared meter is discovered.

## **My experience: an arbitrary property tax pass-through with no relationship to my shop's size**

My lease includes a property tax escalation clause that charges me 10% of the increase between the base-year tax amount and the current year's tax amount. This year, that added up to an \$8,500 tax bill for a 300-square-foot shop — a figure that has no clear relationship to the actual size or value of my space, and one I have no ability to negotiate or challenge. As a first-time tenant, I hired a lawyer to review my lease specifically because I knew I would not catch every problematic clause on my own. Even so, this tax escalation term was never flagged to me as a risk. That is not a reason to excuse it — it is a reason the law needs to protect tenants regardless of the quality of legal advice they can afford, because most small business owners cannot afford, or do not know to seek out, specialized commercial lease attorneys at all.

Property tax pass-throughs charged to commercial tenants should be standardized and capped based on square footage, not left to arbitrary percentages set by individual landlords with no oversight. A shop owner should be able to look at their square footage and know, within a predictable range, what their maximum tax exposure could be — the same way this bill proposes capping rent increases.

## **My request to the Committee**

I ask the Committee to advance Resolution 0496-2026 and to urge the State Legislature to pass A.5568A/S.8319, and I ask that the following protections be included alongside it, either in this bill or in companion legislation:

1. Mandatory written disclosure of shared utility meters and other shared building systems before lease signing, with a clear remedy for tenants who are billed for utilities they do not solely use.
2. Standardized, square-footage-based caps on commercial property tax and other cost pass-throughs, so these charges cannot be set arbitrarily by individual landlords.
3. The rent cap and automatic renewal rights already proposed in A.5568A/S.8319, which would have given me real security and predictability as a small business owner from day one.

Small business owners like me are not asking for a handout. We are asking for the same basic transparency and fair dealing that any tenant deserves: to know what we are paying for, to know what our costs could become, and to not lose the business we built simply because our

lease gave us no protection at renewal time. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony, and thank you for your work on behalf of New York City's small businesses.

Respectfully submitted,

Perri Salka  
Owner, The WonderMart  
141 India St, Brooklyn, NY

**Sources referenced:**

- [NYC Council Resolution 0496-2026](#)
- [NYC Department of Finance — Determining Your Transitional Assessed Value](#)



Dear Chair Thomas-Henry and members of the Small Business Committee,

Thank you for your leadership in finding new and innovative ways to promote small businesses across the Five Boroughs of New York City. TikTok USDS Joint Venture is writing in support of NYC Council [Intro 0408-2026](#). We applaud the reintroduction of this legislation by Council Member Riley that requires the Department of Small Business Services (SBS) to create a matching pilot program for social media content creators and small businesses.

Content creators represent an emerging segment of the workforce and creative economy. Small business formation is occurring at a [historic rate](#) in New York City. Facilitating partnerships as envisioned by this bill can increase commercial visibility, revenue growth, and workforce opportunities for small businesses and entrepreneurs across each Borough.

As a platform used by over 500,000 small and medium-sized businesses in New York we have seen firsthand how TikTok has meaningfully impacted small business sales, hiring and long-term growth. We have also worked with small business owners across New York City to bring more visibility to their successes on TikTok and share their experiences with policymakers and other local, small businesses.<sup>1</sup>

TikTok is committed to supporting entrepreneurs on our platform with innovative products, partnerships and policies designed to promote growth. Last year, TikTok launched Small Biz Fest, offering exclusive, free training opportunities for small businesses across three cities (including NYC), a \$1 million ad credit giveaway and programming to help them connect with one another, reach new audiences, and turn creative content into real business impact.<sup>2</sup> Through this program, small business owners across the country were able to thoughtfully engage with our community of over 200 million Americans, turning business ideas into impact and real-world results.

TikTok has become a launchpad for business growth in today's economy. We are dedicated to helping entrepreneurs in New York City scale their businesses and reach new customers both locally and nationally. The passage of Intro 408 would provide an opportunity for the New York City Council to enable a critical driver of local economic growth and set a national precedent in pro-small business policymaking. We welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss how we can assist you and SBS in this pursuit.

Sincerely,

Julien Nagarajan  
Public Policy Manager, State  
TikTok USDS Joint Venture

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<sup>1</sup> ABCC x TikTok-The Digital Main Street, Albany Black Chamber, ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=DdB\\_Bblkxb](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DdB_Bblkxb))

<sup>2</sup> Fireside Chat unpacks digital boost for small Brooklyn businesses, BKReader, (<https://www.bkreader.com/business-innovation/fireside-chat-unpacks-digital-boost-for-small-brooklyn-businesses-10658350>)

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 09/16/2026

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Haris Khan

Address: 1 Liberty Plaza, 11<sup>th</sup> Floor, New York, NY 10006

I represent: Department of Small Business Services

Address: 1 Liberty Plaza, 11<sup>th</sup> Floor, New York, NY 10006

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 578 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lacey Tauber

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 90 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☒ in opposition

Date: 9/16/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Zach Steinberg

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Real Estate Board of New York

Address: 570 Lexington Ave

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 6090 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lindsay Vigor

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Small Biz Majority

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 874 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: KI-SANG YI

Address: 246 GRAHAM AVE

I represent: GRAND ST BID \* GRAHAM AVE BID

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 90,408,814 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 9.16.26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Francesca Bruce

Address: 246 Graham Avenue

I represent: Grand Street BID

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Whitney Hu

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: The Action Lab

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 578 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Leah Archibald

Address: 2 Kingsland Ave

I represent: Evergreen

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 0578 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Nora Lewis

Address: [Redacted] Brooklyn, NY 11216

I represent: Long Island City Partnership

Address: 2701 Queens Plaza North, Level B,

Long Island City, NY 11101

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: STEVEN SOUTENDIJK

Address: WEST 55<sup>th</sup>

I represent: CUSHMAN + WAKEFIELD

Address: 1290 Ave

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 408 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 9/16/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: AMAUYS GRULLON

Address: 144 STREET BX NY

I represent: BRONX NAZICE

Address: 127 LINCOLN AVE BX NY

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 90 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☒ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Joanne Podell

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Herself

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

▶ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◀

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 90 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☒ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Steven Soutendijk (Saw-ten-dike)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Himself

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

▶ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◀