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Government Relations / Consulting

## THIS WEEK IN NEW YORK

COVERING NEW YORK & CITY GOVERNMENT

SEPTEMBER 26 2025 EDITION



*"Obstacles don't define us. Rather, it is the unparalleled courage and character of us that defines us as a people. So my confidence in the future is steeped in our glorious past - in the face of adversity, we always persist. We persevere, we prevail." Governor Kathy Hochul*

## In The News-New York State



### Governor's \$1 Billion State of the State Sustainable Future Program Takes Shape

Governor Kathy Hochul this week announced the next steps of the \$1 billion Sustainable Future Program which aims to advance clean energy, reduce emissions, and expand green infrastructure.

"New York is a national leader in climate action, and we're proving that we can build a thriving green economy while protecting our planet," Governor Hochul said. "While others may retreat, we are doubling down. The \$1 billion investment from our Sustainable Future Program will directly benefit New Yorkers by making our homes more energy-efficient, our schools healthier, and our communities more resilient. We are creating jobs, improving public health, and ensuring a just and affordable transition for every community."

Specifics of the program include:

**Thermal Energy Networks:** \$200 million is dedicated to expanding thermal energy networks, which use a system of pipes to share heating and cooling resources among multiple buildings. This funding will support projects at municipal and State-owned buildings, and will include several projects within the State University of New York (SUNY) system:

- SUNY Purchase: \$50 million to design and construct the first phase of a thermal energy network and establish a framework for future geothermal systems on campus.
- State University of New York at Buffalo: \$68 million to design and build energy hubs and thermal energy networks, phasing out fossil fuel-based systems and replacing them with on-site electrical systems.
- State University of New York at Stony Brook: \$22 million to design and construct thermal energy systems at two buildings on campus.

**Clean Transportation Infrastructure:** At least \$200 million to accelerate the transition to electric vehicles including:

- \$100 million for zero-emission school buses and their supporting infrastructure.
- At least \$50 million to support medium- and heavy-duty vehicle charging, including \$15 million for depot charging for fleets and \$35 million for shared "charging hubs" at distribution centers and ports.
- At least \$50 million to provide rebates for EV charging stations at workplaces, multifamily buildings, and large public sector organizations, making charging more affordable and accessible.

**Accelerating Renewable Energy Projects:** \$200 million will be provided to the New York Power Authority (NYPA) to finance multiple renewable energy generation projects.

**Transition To Clean Energy More Affordable:** \$150 million will support the launch of a new Green Small Buildings Program, administered by New York State Homes and Community Renewal (HCR) to assist eligible homes with making energy-efficient upgrades, including heat pumps.

**Energy Efficiency:** \$50 million will be allocated to the EmPower+ program to provide low- and moderate-income residents with no-cost home energy assessments and energy efficiency upgrades, focusing on heat pump installations.

**Schools:** \$50 million to help under-resourced public schools decarbonize their building portfolios.

The Sustainable Future Program was announced in this year's State of the State address in January and funded in the FY2025-2026 Budget enacted in May.



## SLA Expands Liquor Licensing Eligibility for Adult Recreational Businesses

The New York State Liquor Authority (SLA) this week announced updated guidance clarifying that a wide range of adult-oriented recreational businesses are eligible to apply for on-premises liquor licenses. The action is part of Governor Kathy Hochul's broader effort directing state agencies to review outdated laws, rules, and policies to support modernization and economic growth.

Under this new Advisory, businesses such as pool halls, axe throwing venues, virtual reality arcades, go-kart tracks, darts lounges, mini-golf courses, comedy clubs, paint-and-sip studios, cooking class studios, and other similar adult recreational type venues may qualify for liquor licenses—provided they comply with all applicable state and local laws and demonstrate the ability to serve alcohol responsibly.

“This is about helping modern hospitality businesses grow while maintaining responsible oversight,” said SLA Chair Lily Fan. “Governor Hochul has tasked us with reviewing outdated rules and modernizing our approach. New Yorkers are embracing social experiences that go beyond traditional restaurants and bars, and under the Governor's leadership, our agency is evolving to meet that trend.”

The action is consistent with the SLA's legal authority under Alcoholic Beverage Control Law § 64-a(6)(b), which allows the agency to license “lawful adult entertainment or recreational facilities” at its discretion. The accompanying regulation—9 NYCRR § 48.1—confirms the SLA may expand eligibility beyond a fixed list of venue types.

Businesses seeking more information about eligibility or licensing requirements should visit [sla.ny.gov](https://sla.ny.gov) or contact the SLA's Licensing Bureau. The SLA Advisory can be viewed [here](#).



# NYS COELIG Seeks Public Comments on Potential Proposals for the State's Ethics and Lobbying Laws & Regulations

## *Commission on Ethics in Lobbying & Government Accepting Public Comments Through October 2<sup>nd</sup>*

The NYS Commission on Ethics in Lobbying and Government held its annual [public hearing](#) this week, seeking comments on the Commission's current operations and suggestions for improving the system. The public comment will be used to develop the Commission's 2026 legislative agenda.

To frame the discussion, the Commission provided guiding questions and [potential proposals](#). The potential proposals are preliminary and aimed at achieving full compliance with the state's ethics and lobbying laws and to increase public confidence in the integrity of state government, according to the Commission.

In addition to the hour-long public hearing, the Commission is accepting written testimony through October 2<sup>nd</sup>. Written comments should be directed by email to [PublicHearing@ethics.ny.gov](mailto:PublicHearing@ethics.ny.gov).

Included in the preliminary document are proposals to:

- **Prohibit or Restrict Campaign Donations from Lobbyists and Clients, or Prohibit Lobbyists and Clients from Lobbying Officials to Whose Campaigns They Have Contributed:** Limit or prohibit or otherwise regulate campaign donations, as well as services provided or directed by lobbyists and their relatives, to incumbents or candidates for offices within the Commission's jurisdiction.
- **Require Lobbyists and Clients to Report Their Campaign Contributions to COELIG:** Currently, lobbying reports are not required to contain information related to campaign contributions. Amend the Lobbying Act to require lobbyists and clients to report campaign contributions on their lobbying filings.
- **Make Accessorial (Accomplice) Liability Explicit for Lobbying Act Violations: Amend the Executive Law, Public Officers Law, Civil Service Law, and Lobbying Act to expressly prohibit individuals and entities under the Commission's jurisdiction from soliciting, aiding, or importuning others to engage in conduct that violates the State's ethics and lobbying laws.** The Public Officers Law and the Lobbying Act do not expressly authorize COELIG to pursue individuals who aid others in the commission of acts in violation of the law. The inclusion of so called "accessorial liability" in the law would strengthen COELIG's enforcement arm and promote compliance with the State's ethics and lobbying laws. S7125 Sponsored by Senator James Skoufis.
- **Make Explicit that Violations of the Lobbying Regulations Constitute Violations of the Lobbying Act and Subject Violators to Penalties:** Currently, the only amounts assessed under the lobbying regulations are filing fees and late fees. To the extent legislation is required, Legislative Law Article 1-A should be amended to authorize the Commission to impose penalties for violations of the Commission's Lobbying regulations.

- **Explore Technological Options and Legislation to Enhance the Review and Audit of Lobbying Filings for Compliance:** Explore technological options and legislation to enhance the Commission's capability to automate the review of lobbying filings and to identify potential hot spots, inconsistencies, missing information, and other triggers for further review and follow up.
- **Require Lobbyists to Provide Additional Details on the Lobbying Activity in which They Engage, Including the Details of Time Spent Lobbying Each Bill, Subject, and Target:** Amend the Lobbying Act to require lobbyists to keep records of and report specific detail on their lobbying activity, particularly as it relates to specific lobbying contacts – for example, summaries of meetings, including the location and duration of meetings and matters discussed and any materials or data provided, and require lobbyists in bi-monthly report to indicate how much of their time they spent lobbying each specific bill, subject, and target. Records will be made available to COELIG auditors upon request.
- **Require Electronic Filings of all Lobbying Filings.** A2330/S5843 AM John McDonald/Senator Skoufis.

## *In The News-New York City*



### **\$3.5 Billion Brooklyn Marine Terminal Vision Plan Approved**

Governor Kathy Hochul, Mayor Eric Adams, Representative Dan Goldman, Senator Andrew Gounardes, Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso, and New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) President Andrew Kimball this week announced that the Brooklyn Marine Terminal (BMT) Task Force has passed a plan to turn the BMT into a modern, maritime port and create a mixed-use community along the Brooklyn waterfront.

The proposal — which is backed by \$418 million in city, state, and federal investments — will transform the marine terminal into a 60-acre, all-electric maritime port that can serve as a “key economic driver” for the community and city, according to the Mayor. In addition to a revitalized port, the plan will also create 6,000 new homes — including over 2,400 permanently-affordable units — as well as at least 28 acres of public space, 275,000 square feet of commercial space, 250,000 square feet of community facility space, and 275,000 square feet of light-industrial and industrial space at discounted rents. The plan, which covers a total of 122 acres, will also deliver resiliency and infrastructure upgrades for the area while generating an estimated \$18 billion in economic impact, 37,000 temporary construction jobs, and 2,000 permanent jobs.





The [Vision Plan](#) adopted by the BMT Task Force serves as the foundation for all future investments and redevelopment at BMT, Mayor Adams said.

“For decades, the Brooklyn Marine Terminal has been allowed to decay and become a barrier between our communities and the waterfront,” said State Senator Gounardes. “Now, we have a unique chance to transform the terminal into something that actually meets our needs: a mixed-use neighborhood with a modernized port, new parks, industrial and community space, and thousands of new affordable homes. This is a complex project with a lot of different stakeholders, and this vision plan reflects the many good ideas and difficult decisions generated by the Task Force process. If we’re serious about creating a city that works for all of us, we need to actually get things done. This plan is an important step in doing just that.”

The BMT Task Force Vision Plan includes:

- **Port:** BMT will be transformed into a 60-acre sustainable all-electric port with a new marginal pier to promote water-to-water freight, removing trucks from local streets, in line with the Adams administration’s Blue Highways initiative to move more goods along the city’s waterways.
- **Affordable Housing:** The plan will deliver 6,000 housing units on the site, with 40 percent, or 2,400 units, permanently affordable at an average of 60 percent of the Area Medium Income. A total of 200 affordable units will be reserved on-site for New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) Red Hook Houses East and West residents, and 50 affordable units will be reserved for NYCHA Wyckoff and Gowanus Houses residents. Additionally, a \$75 million fund to preserve or create affordable units off-site in Community Board 6 will be created, and \$200 million will be allocated to NYCHA Red Hook Houses East and West.
- **Atlantic Basin:** The Brooklyn Cruise Terminal will also be redeveloped with new public open space, industrial and commercial space, and up to a 400-key hotel, transforming the area around Pier 11 and Pier 12 into an attractive waterfront destination district open to the community.
- **Industrial:** The plan will create over 275,000 square feet of industrial space available at discounted rents, more than 275,000 square feet of commercial space across the site to enliven and support community retail corridors, and a \$10 million development fund to support the industrial sector within the broader Red Hook neighborhood.
- **Education and Workforce:** The plan promotes a comprehensive workforce strategy, including a Project Labor Agreement; targeted community hiring; a dedicated world-class experiential learning center at Pier 11; and funding to establish an economic mobility network in Red Hook and a maritime career readiness program for residents of NYCHA Red Hook Houses East and Red Hook Houses West.
- **Resiliency:** The plan calls for a comprehensive resiliency strategy, including a raised site to protect against future sea level rise, a floodwall designed to withstand a 2,100, 100-year storm, and on-site stormwater management.

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- **Connectivity and Transit:** The plan prioritizes pedestrians and public transit, focusing on pedestrian mobility while also improving bus speeds to rider destinations and reducing truck traffic. It will include a \$50 million commitment for electric shuttle service as a bridge towards the Metropolitan Transportation Authority evaluating the restoration of bus service such as the B71, or establishing enhanced and/or new bus service for improved intra and inter-neighborhood mobility.
- **Governance and Implementation:** The plan will create a new legal entity — the Brooklyn Marine Terminal Development Corporation (BMTDC). The board of the BMTDC will include appointees of the mayor, governor, and local elected officials, as well as representation from the local community, such as NYCHA Red Hook East and West, as well as maritime and industrial expertise.



## Bills Approved by the City Council

**Introduction 429-A**, sponsored by Council Member Pierina Ana Sanchez. Requires inspections of gas piping to be conducted by either a licensed master plumber or a licensed journeyman plumber working under the direct supervision of a licensed master plumber. Inspections would include the point of connection with gas appliances and would change the definition of ordinary plumbing work to include the replacement of gas furnaces, household gas appliances, and gas appliance connectors. This bill would also reinstate the plumbing and fire suppression license board and expand the Department of Building's (DOB) ability to seize equipment used for unlicensed work.

**Introduction 621-A**, sponsored by Council Member Sandy Nurse. Expands the definition of tenant harassment to include unlawful evictions.

**Introduction 780-A**, sponsored by Council Member Sandy Nurse. Allows safe/sick time under the City's Earned Safe and Sick Time Act (ESSTA) to be used to provide care for a child or care recipient, attend a legal proceeding for public benefits or housing, respond to a public disaster, or respond to workplace violence. This bill would also provide an additional 32 hours of unpaid safe/sick time under ESSTA, which would be available for use immediately upon hire and subsequently on the first day of each calendar year. The unpaid safe/sick time would replace the two days that were provided by the City's Temporary Schedule Change Act (TSCA).

**Introduction 1327-A**, sponsored by Council Member James Gennaro, Streamlines the stormwater permitting process by allowing developers to obtain a stormwater construction permit before executing and recording a maintenance easement. The maintenance easement would instead be required post-construction, as a condition of obtaining approval for a notice of termination. The bill would also increase the civil penalty cap for violations of the stormwater pollution control code from \$10,000 to \$15,000.

# *Briefs*

## **MTA Metro-North Railroad ‘Super-Express’ Trips Between Poughkeepsie and New York City to Launch Ahead of Schedule on October 6<sup>th</sup>**

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority will launch faster “super-express” trains on the Hudson Line between Poughkeepsie and New York City, cutting travel times between Poughkeepsie and Grand Central Terminal to less than 90 minutes each way. The first “super-express” trains will run on Monday, October 6<sup>th</sup>.

Metro-North is shortening five trips between Poughkeepsie and Grand Central to less than 90 minutes and one trip down to 95 minutes, delivering the fastest trips ever between the two cities. The travel time for a non-express trip between Poughkeepsie and Grand Central can be up to 115 minutes, depending on the number of stops. The run time improvements cut travel times by as much as 7 minutes one way compared to the current super-express train schedules, and by as much as 20 minutes one way compared to non-express trains.

### **Super-Express Hudson Line Service:**

- The 6:08 a.m. train from Poughkeepsie to Grand Central will now be an 89-minute run, five minutes faster than the current run time, with stops at New Hamburg, Beacon and Harlem-125th St.
- The 6:42 a.m. train from Poughkeepsie will depart two minutes later at 6:44 a.m. and will now be an 89-minute run, seven minutes faster than the current run time, with stops at New Hamburg, Beacon, and Harlem-125th St.
- The 7:03 a.m. train from Poughkeepsie will depart two minutes later at 7:05 a.m. and will now be a 95-minute run, five minutes faster than the current run time, with at New Hamburg, New Beacon, and Croton-Harmon.
- The 5:08 p.m. train from Grand Central will depart one minute later at 5:09 p.m. and will now be an 88-minute run, seven minutes faster than the current run time, with stops at Harlem-125th St, Beacon, and New Hamburg.
- The 5:30 p.m. train from Grand Central to Poughkeepsie will now be an 88- minute run, six minutes faster than the current run time. with stops at Beacon and New Hamburg.
- The 6:11 p.m. train from Grand Central will depart one minute later at 6:12 p.m. and will now be an 88-minute run, seven minutes faster than the current run time with stops at Harlem-125th St, Beacon and New Hamburg.

## **NYS to Begin Mailing Tax Rebate Checks on Friday**

The state will begin mailing tax rebate checks today to about 8 million New Yorkers, Governor Kathy Hochul announced.

The "inflation rebate" checks were included in the FT2025-2026 enacted budget. The check amounts range from \$150 to \$400, based on income, and there is an income cap on eligibility. These payments are separate from the School Tax Relief (STAR) checks some households will receive this fall.

"Starting today, we're sending inflation refund checks to over 8 million New Yorkers because it's simple — this is your money and we're putting it back in your pockets," Governor Hochul said.

To be eligible, for an inflation refund check if, for tax year 2023, New Yorkers must have:

- Filed Form IT-201, New York State Resident Income Tax Return;
- Reported income within the qualifying thresholds below; and
- Were not claimed as a dependent on another taxpayer's return.

Qualifying Income thresholds:

- Joint tax filers with income up to \$150,000 will receive a \$400 check.
- Joint tax filers with income over \$150,000 but no greater than \$300,000 will receive a \$300 check.
- Single tax filers with income up to \$75,000 will receive a \$200 check.
- Single tax filers with incomes over \$75,000 but no greater than \$150,000 will receive a \$150 check.

## **Governor Directs State Agencies to Accelerate Renewable Energy Development and Construction**

Under the direction of Governor Kathy Hochul, the New York State Energy Research Development Authority (NYSERDA) is launching a new solicitation for renewable energy and state agencies are working to advance shovel-ready renewable energy projects as quickly as possible. The efforts are aimed at utilizing sunsetting federal clean energy tax credits.

The [solicitation](#) is designed to advance late-stage large-scale renewable energy projects ready to commence construction in New York. To expedite contracting, NYSERDA has also streamlined bid requirements, with full details outlined in the solicitation documents. The process for submitting proposals into the land-based renewables solicitation will be conducted in two steps:

- Eligibility applications are due on October 21, 2025.
- Final proposals from eligible participants are due on December 4, 2025, by 3 p.m.

Conditional award notifications are expected to be issued to proposers in February 2026, followed by an announcement of selected projects once the awarded contracts have been executed.

## **Applications Are Now Available for Cybersecurity Grants for Local Governments**

Governor Kathy Hochul announced the release of the combined FY2022 and FY2023 State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program (SLCGP) Request for Applications (RFA) for eligible New York State entities to apply for Multi-Factor Authentication tokens. The RFA was developed to help reduce cyber risk and build cyber resiliency in local governments statewide.

All New York State local government entities are eligible to apply for the Combined FY2022 and FY2023 SLCGP for cybersecurity shared services. Nonprofit organizations, private institutions of higher education, and private/nonpublic K-12 schools are not eligible for this program.

The application deadline is October 22, 2025, by 5:00 pm.



## **NYC Council Approves New Housing on NYC H+H Campus**

The New York City Council voted to approve the NYC Health + Hospitals (H+H) Just Home proposal with the Fortune Society to develop supportive housing on the hospital's campus for New Yorkers exiting the justice system with chronic and complex medical needs. The project would create 83 new homes, including 58 permanent, supportive studio units for formerly incarcerated New Yorkers, and 24 affordable units accessible through NYC Housing Connect. This development will include on-site social services, 24-hour security, and around-the-clock staff.

"Expanding access to safe, stable, and affordable homes for New Yorkers, especially those with past involvement in the justice system and complex medical needs, is critical to public safety and confronting the housing crisis," said Speaker Adrienne Adams.

## **Airport Workers at Westchester County Airport Join the TWU**

Workers at Westchester County Airport voted overwhelmingly on Tuesday to join the Transport Workers Union of America, the largest airport workers union in the country.

"Today's resounding vote sends a clear message to AvPorts; workers are fed up with bosses sticking it to them. The TWU will fight to fix staffing shortages and end the abuse of dangerous forced overtime" said TWU International President John Samuelsen. "The TWU runs Westchester County's transport systems. In addition to our newest airport members we represent School Bus Drivers, Bee-Line Bus Operators, and Metro-North workers."

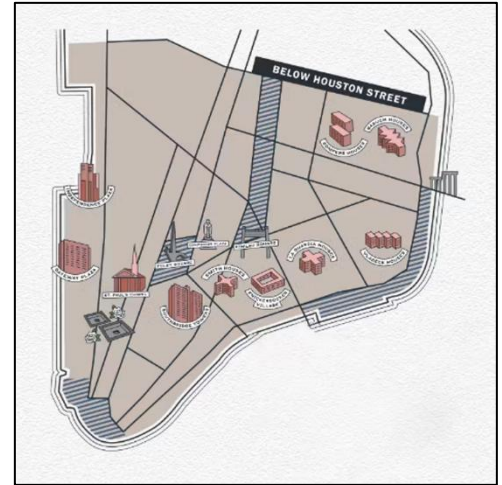
The Ramp and Senior Ramp Agents at Westchester County Airport work for six major carriers; BermudAir, JetBlue Airways, Delta Air Lines, American Airlines, and Breeze Airways. The workers are trained on practices and procedures for all six airlines and perform additional overnight maintenance work in addition to their duties on the ramp.

"These workers have been mistreated for years and getting a solid TWU contract that addresses these staffing issues is our top priority," said TWU Organizing Director Angelo Cucuzza. "Management asks for 'volunteers' to work extra shifts every week, and if you don't volunteer, you're forced to work anyway. This is unacceptable and we will work to rectify these quality-of-life issues."

The Ramp and Senior Ramp Agents will join TWU Local 504, which represents contract airport workers across the country. The TWU is the nation's largest airport workers union, representing Ramp Agents, Flight Attendants, Maintenance Technicians, Dispatchers, and more.

## 9/11 Solidarity Network Helps Claimants Obtain Vital Documentation for 9/11 Compensation Fund Claims

It is becoming increasingly difficult for some claimants to find documents to prove their presence at an eligible location so many years after the attacks. In fact, earlier this year, the New York City Police Department (NYPD) went to the State Legislature for assistance in verifying its members' 9/11 service. On September 10<sup>th</sup>, Governor Kathy Hochul signed chapter 390 of the Laws of 2025 which establishes a presumption that a New York City Police Pension Fund member participated in the rescue, recovery, and clean-up operations at the World Trade Center, unless their employer proves the contrary by competent evidence.



9/11 Exposure Zone

The 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund (VCF) understands this challenge and encourages individuals who were present in the exposure zone to gather and save their proof of presence documents now, even if they aren't currently ill or planning to file a claim.

To help members of the general public verify their 9/11 service, Pitta Bishop & Del Giorno LLC's affiliate [Pitta & Baione LLP](#) is developing the 9/11 Solidarity Network, a system where members can act as witnesses for one another in verifying 9/11 service. The network utilizes sworn ***Witness Presence Statements*** from people who can attest to a claimant's presence which are accepted as secondary evidence by the VCF when primary documentation is unavailable.

By participating, individuals can provide the crucial testimony a fellow member might need while also securing potential support for their own future claims. This initiative formalizes the collective memory of its members to help ensure no one is left to prove their presence alone.

For more information regarding the 9/11 Solidarity Network, please contact Pitta & Baione at 844-901-1262.

## Coming Up

### New York State

**Tuesday, September 30<sup>th</sup>**

**Joint Public Hearing - Oversight of the Public Service Commission's processes related to rate case and generic proceedings**, Senate Hearing Room, 250 Broadway, 19<sup>th</sup> Floor, New York, 10 a.m.

**Public Hearing - Medicinal value of psilocybin**, Assembly Hearing Room, 250 Broadway, 19<sup>th</sup> Floor, New York, 11 a.m.

# ***New York City***

## ***Monday, September 29<sup>th</sup>***

***Committee on Civil Service and Labor***, Council Chambers – City Hall, 10 a.m.

***Committee on Housing and Buildings***, Council Chambers – City Hall, 10 a.m.

***Committee on Contracts***, Council Chambers – City Hall, 1 p.m.

***Committee on Parks and Recreation***, Council Chambers - City Hall, 1 p.m.

***Committee on Public Housing***, 250 Broadway – 8<sup>th</sup> Floor – Hearing room 1, 1 p.m.

## ***Tuesday, September 30<sup>th</sup>***

***Committee on Technology***, Council Chambers – City Hall, 10 a.m.

***Committee on Public Housing***, Council Chambers – City Hall, 10 a.m.

***Committee on Oversight and Investigations***, Council Chambers - City Hall, 10 a.m.

***Committee on Public Safety***, Council Chambers – City Hall, 10 a.m.

***Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Sitings and Dispositions***, Committee Room – City Hall, 10 a.m.

***Committee on Education***, 250 Broadway – 8<sup>th</sup> Floor – Hearing Room 1, 1 p.m.

***Committee on Higher Education***, 250 Broadway – 8<sup>th</sup> Floor - Hearing Room 3, 1 p.m.

## ***Wednesday, October 1<sup>st</sup>***

***Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure***, 250 Broadway – 8<sup>th</sup> Floor – Hearing Room 1, 10 a.m.

## ***Friday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>***

***Committee on Civil and Human Rights***, 250 Broadway – 8<sup>th</sup> Floor – Hearing Room 1, 1 p.m.

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