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New York City Council Stated Meeting Report

Every two weeks the New York City Council meets for its Stated Meeting to introduce and pass legislation. As a regular feature, Searchlight covers these meetings and posts a summary of the bills passed.

STATED MEETING - MARCH 26, 2003

Quote of the Day:

"Go into any neighborhood in the city and you will find posters and flyers attached to trees advertising realty, weight loss programs, all sorts of music, and home repair services. These entrepreneurs/vandals have taken it upon themselves to use our city's trees as free advertising space." – *Councilmember David Weprin in support of a bill to double the fine for those who nail or staple signs to trees.*

Meeting Summary:

At the March 24 Stated Meeting, the New York City Council passed four new pieces of legislation aimed at helping the city's environment.

One measure ([Intro 109-A](#)) would require that city-owned vehicles, with the exception of fire and police departments, to use recycled motor oil. Some federal government agencies such as the Department of Defense and the U.S. Postal Service already use so-called re-refined motor oil.

Another bill ([Intro 240-A](#)) would double the fine for those that put posters and notices on trees. The number of trees in the city has decreased by 30 percent since 1978 and the council argues that some of those trees have been killed by illegal postings.

Other environmental measures passed by the council included a bill ([Intro 123-A](#)) that would increase the fines for those who pollute the city's sewer systems and legislation (

[Intro 377](#)

) giving city agencies more flexibility if they want to purchase energy efficient products that may cost more initially, but save energy and money in the long term.

The council also passed a bill ([Intro 178-A](#)) aimed at protecting taxicab drivers from excessive fines if their hazard lights burn out. "An automatic penalty is not only unfair, but it encourages a driver to work without fixing the light to recoup their losses from the fine," said Councilmember Diana Reyna who drafted the legislation.

Each piece of legislation will now go to the mayor, who has 30 days to sign or veto each bill.

At the meeting, the council also received official notice that Mayor Michael Bloomberg vetoed three bills passed in recent weeks.

The mayor vetoed legislation ([Intro 93-A](#)) that would allow welfare recipients to count GED and English language classes toward work requirements. Bloomberg said the bill "mandates education at the expense of work." The mayor also said the measure could jeopardize the city's ability to comply with state and federal work requirements and that the city could be fined over \$200 million a year.

Bloomberg also rejected legislation ([Intro 278-A](#)) which would require pharmacies that do not carry emergency contraceptives to post signs indicating that they are not sold at that location and a bill ([Intro 281-A](#)) requiring hospitals to inform rape victims that emergency contraception is available and to offer it if requested.

"It is the responsibility of the city to ensure that victims of rape and sexual assault receive the best possible care during their recovery," said Councilmember Christine Quinn.

The council has 30 days to override the mayor's vetoes and can do so with a two-thirds majority of the council. The council is expected to override all three.

The next Stated Meeting is scheduled for April 9.