



2014 Board of Directors

Lance Jay Brown FAIA
President

Tomas J. Rossant AIA
First Vice President / President-Elect

David Burney FAIA
Vice President for Design Excellence

David Piscuskas FAIA LEED AP
Vice President for Professional
Development

Gerard F.X. Geier II FAIA FIIDA LEED AP
Vice President for Public Outreach

Jane Smith AIA IIDA
Secretary

Mark C. Regulinski AIA
Treasurer

Andy Frankl HON. AIA NYS
Director for Development Affairs

Lia Gartner FAIA LEED AP
Director for Educational Affairs

Ashok Raiji ASSOC. AIA PE LEED AP
Director for Industry Affairs

Laurie D. Kerr AIA LEED AP
Director for Legislative Affairs

Abby P. Suckle FAIA LEED AP
Director for Programs and Strategic
Planning

Barbara E. Spandorf AIA
Director for Publications

Jessica Sheridan AIA LEED AP BD+C
Associate Director

Robert A. Schubert
Public Director

Mark A. Wigley
Public Director for Educational Affairs

Anthony J. Mannarino
Public Director for Professional Affairs

Venus Carbuccia AIAS
Director for Student Affairs

Jill N. Lerner FAIA
Immediate Past President

Jennifer Sage FAIA LEED AP
Alternate Director for Design Excellence

Venesa Alicea AIA LEED AP BD+C
Alternate Director for Professional
Development

Illya Azaroff AIA
Alternate Director for Public Outreach

Rick Bell FAIA
Executive Director

Testimony before the New York City Council Housing and Buildings Committee on T2014-0702 and T2014-0701 April 2, 2014

Good morning Chairman Williams and members of the Housing and Buildings Committee. My name is Rick Bell, and I am the Executive Director of the New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. I am here, on behalf of our 5,200 members, to offer testimony on T2014-0702 and T2014-0701 in relation to public access stairs and hold-open devices.

In 2003, AIANY opened the Center for Architecture. Through exhibitions, programs, and special events, the Center aims to improve the quality and sustainability of the built environment, foster exchange between the design, construction, and real estate communities, and encourage collaborations across the city and globe. The Center also celebrates New York's vibrant architecture, explores its urban fabric, shares community resources, and provides opportunities for scholarship. As the city's leading cultural institution focusing on architecture, the Center drives positive change through the power of design.

The Center for Architecture also shows the value of active stairwells. We support T2014-0702 and T2014-0701 because measures that increase visibility of, and access to, stairs increase their use. The Center welcomes 5,000 visitors a month, and of those visitors, ninety five percent take the stairs to reach our gallery spaces and lecture halls. This public access stairway is centrally located and inviting and enables building occupants to utilize stairs to travel between the building entrance level and other levels. Where the common entrance area at the building entrance level provides direct access to an elevator, direct access to a public access stairway is also provided.

In regards to the use of hold-open devices, the Center for Architecture has magnetic hold-open doors, which has proved successful in maintaining access to the stairs. Increasing knowledge of stair location through improved accessibility and visibility can also improve familiarity with emergency and fire safety protocols. Other jurisdictions have successfully adopted their use; they are permitted by the International Building Code and various other local building codes around the country, including the Chicago and Kentucky building codes. New York City should implement them too.

We think that the proposed T2014-0702 and T2014-0701 offer substantial health, safety, and environmental benefits for relatively low cost. Regular stair use increases physical activity, is associated with numerous health benefits, and can be incorporated into the daily lives of most able-bodied individuals. This legislation is being proposed to promote stairway use in New York City by making stairways more accessible, visible and functional, thereby promoting physical activity and public health. As seen at the Center for Architecture, these stairways also promote community and collaboration. They serve as a space for socializing and networking, as well as physical activity.

We respectfully urge the earliest possible favorable consideration of this legislation.

Respectfully submitted,



Rick Bell, FAIA