



December 3, 2018

## **AIA New York Statement of Support for Retrofitting Legislation**

AIA New York strongly advocates for a more sustainable and equitable built environment. Through programming and by supporting various pieces of legislation, we have encouraged our 5,600 members to design in a more environmentally conscious manner.

Despite advances in sustainable design over the years, far more can be done to make our cities green. Crucially, we need to support efforts to retrofit existing buildings. While sustainable design for new buildings is increasingly widespread, far more New Yorkers live and work in older buildings, most of which have not been retrofitted according to the latest technologies and design practices.

If we do not retrofit our existing building stock en masse, we jeopardize the health and safety of ourselves and future generations. Right now, around 70% of New York's carbon emissions are generated by buildings. In order to tackle issues around climate change, resiliency, and air quality, we need to retrofit our existing building stock.

Furthermore, continuing to overlook the retrofitting of existing structures may lead to greater inequity in our built environment. It should not be a luxury to live or work in a well-insulated building, though in New York City this is often the case. Those with sustainably designed apartments and offices often pay less in energy bills, which further exacerbates financial divides. If we do not address this issue now, our city will increasingly be divided between those who can afford to live and work with all the benefits of sustainable design, and the less fortunate who live and work in deteriorating buildings.

For these reasons, we applaud Council Member Costa Constantinides' pieces of legislation, Int. 1252 and Int. 1253, which require existing buildings over 25,000 square feet to meet energy efficiency targets. For years, market forces and government incentives have led to slow but steady increases in retrofitting. Unfortunately, we do not have time for a process that does not require immediate improvements. We need the City to require that the bulk of our large building stock start retrofitting as soon as possible.

These pieces of legislation have the potential to significantly improve the daily lives of millions of New Yorkers, while also spurring the growth of the green sector. New Yorkers deserve to live and work in better conditions, and for that reason we ask the City Council to pass, and the Mayor sign, Int. 1252 and Int. 1253.

Sincerely,

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