



**Testimony of the New York City Community Land Initiative (NYCCLI)
To the Housing and Buildings Committee
New York City Council**

April 10, 2018

The New York City Community Land Initiative (NYCCLI) appreciates the opportunity to testify about Intro 722. NYCCLI is an alliance of community, base-building, affordable housing, and economic justice groups, as well as long-standing and emerging community land trusts (CLTs) across NYC. Our alliance advocates for CLTs as a mechanism to support the creation and preservation of deeply and permanently affordable, community-controlled housing and other critical community needs.

We thank Council Speaker Johnson and Council Members Constantinides and Cornegy for introducing Intro 722, which would require the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) to report annually on expiring affordable housing units, by income levels, in neighborhoods across the City. **NYCCLI strongly supports this legislation, which will shine a critical spotlight on the issue of expiring affordable housing subsidies citywide.**

NYCCLI represents community-based groups working to develop CLTs and permanently affordable housing in communities across the City, many of which are experiencing the debilitating effects of expiring housing affordability. NYCCLI members include emerging CLTs in neighborhoods like East Harlem where, according to a 2012 Regional Plan Association study, over 2,600 units of affordable housing are set to expire between 2010 and 2020, with an additional 5,000 units set to expire by 2030. Passage of Intro 722 will help the City and organizations like ours better understand the scope of expiring subsidy -- and propose solutions to preserve units at risk of being lost.

NYCCLI additionally urges the City to prevent the expiration of affordable housing subsidies by investing in and supporting the CLT model citywide. All publicly subsidized affordable housing faces a perennial problem: subsidy expiration, which puts housing affordability in jeopardy every 15 to 30 years. CLTs provide a legal and organizational framework that preserve affordable housing in perpetuity. By placing land under the stewardship of a community-led land trust, the city creates an essential backstop against speculation and privatization of affordable housing assets. The longstanding Cooper Square CLT, for example, has created and preserved housing affordable to households earning 26.5% - 36% Area Median Income (AMI) on Manhattan's Lower East Side.

Additionally, we know that early awareness and planning is essential to effective preservation, and echo the recommendations of ANHD and other advocates that the legislation include audits prior to year 15 and year 5 for expiring tax credit deals. Without an “early warning” system in place, HPD and New York’s mission-driven developers will be hard pressed to respond to the threat of expiring tax credit subsidy with a robust preservation program in place.

The past year has seen record investment by NYC in the CLT model, but we know that for the model to succeed at the scale required by NYC’s affordable housing crisis, more support is necessary. By investing in CLTs – including through preference in asset disposition to CLTs or through prioritization of capital subsidies to projects on CLTs – our City can step away from short-term subsidy programs and begin to stabilize neighborhoods plagued by gentrification and displacement.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. We look forward to continued dialogue and partnership to expand the CLT model and its benefits for New Yorkers and their neighborhoods. For more information or questions, please contact Jenny Akchin at Picture the Homeless (646-314-6423, jenny@picturethehomeless.org), or Susan Shin at New Economy Project (212-680-5100, susan@neweconomynyc.org).