

May 16, 2023

[Resubmitted with additional signatories.]

The Honorable Eric L. Adams
Mayor, New York City
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

The Honorable Adrienne E. Adams
Speaker, New York City Council
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor Adams and Speaker Adams:

The undersigned 113 organizations call on you to enact the **Community Land Act**, an urgently-needed set of bills that gives community land trusts (CLTs) and other nonprofits tools to develop and preserve permanently-affordable housing, community and commercial space, and other neighborhood assets. By taking land off the speculative market, CLTs protect public investment in affordable housing and maintain affordability over generations.

Following a state budget that failed to meaningfully address the housing crisis, New York City must take bold and immediate action to reverse the tide of displacement in Black and Brown communities and ensure affordable, dignified housing for all New Yorkers. The Community Land Act will bring land and housing into community control – shielding them from predatory markets, supporting neighborhood-led development, and increasing the supply of permanently-affordable social housing.¹ We urge you to support the Community Land Act and bring it to a vote this session.

Our organizations include community, arts and faith-based organizations; tenant and civic associations; CLTs, community development corporations, and other affordable housing developers; and city- and statewide networks including the NYC Community Land Initiative, ANHD, The Supportive Housing Network of NYC, and Housing Justice for All. Collectively, we represent tens of thousands of New Yorkers and have decades of experience working to create and preserve deeply- and permanently-affordable housing and other neighborhood-led development.

The Community Land Act includes:

- **Community Opportunity to Purchase Act (Int. 196):** Int. 196 would give CLTs and other qualified nonprofits a first chance to buy multifamily residential buildings when a landlord sells. Modeled on successful legislation in other cities, COPA helps level the playing field for nonprofits to acquire, develop and preserve permanently-affordable housing.

¹ Oksana Mironova, Samuel Stein, Celeste Hornbach, Jacob Udel: “*Pathways to Social Housing in New York: 20 policies to shift from private profit to public good*” Community Service Society of New York, November 2022

- **Public Land for Public Good (Int. 637):** Int. 637 would prioritize CLTs and not-for-profit developers when New York City disposes of public land. The bill will help ensure that vacant and underutilized public land is used to provide permanently-affordable housing and meet other critical needs.
- **Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Resolution (Res. 38):** Res. 38 calls on New York State to enact legislation giving tenants a first right to collectively buy their buildings when a landlord sells. Like COPA, TOPA would help bring housing into permanently-affordable tenant and community control.
- **Permanently abolishing and replacing NYC’s tax lien sale.** The tax lien sale has long fueled speculation and displacement in BIPOC communities. New York City should replace the lien sale with an equitable system that engages CLTs to preserve affordable housing and keep New Yorkers in their homes.

As you know, nearly one-third of New York City tenants are severely rent-burdened,² and the population of unhoused New Yorkers has skyrocketed.³ Speculative landlords, meanwhile, are reportedly warehousing over 60,000 vacant rent-stabilized apartments.⁴ Majority-Black neighborhoods are bracing for another onslaught of foreclosures that strip families of wealth and housing stability, fueling racial inequality.⁵

The Community Land Act will help level the playing field for CLTs and other nonprofits that reach deeper affordability levels and maintain affordability over longer terms than other developers. Together, these measures will address root causes of our city's affordability crisis, combat displacement of low-income New Yorkers, and build collective wealth in Black and brown communities.

Our organizations would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss the legislation in greater detail. Please feel free to contact Will Spisak (will@neweconomynyc.org), Senior Program Associate at New Economy Project, with any questions or to schedule a meeting.

Respectfully,

89th Street Tenants Unidos Association
AD-WO - Val Alen Institute
Affordable Housing is For All
A. Philip Randolph Square Neighborhood Alliance
Art Against Displacement

² Mihir Zaveri and Dana Rubinstein, “Eric Adams Faces Pressure on New York’s Housing Crisis as Rents Rise” *The New York Times*, May 24, 2022

³ Coalition for the Homeless, Basic Facts About Homelessness
<https://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org/basic-facts-about-homelessness-new-york-city/>

⁴ Sam Rabiya, “More than 60,000 Rent-Stabilized Apartments Are Now Vacant — and Tenant Advocates Say Landlords Are Holding Them for ‘Ransom’” *The City*, October 19, 2022

⁵ George Joseph, “With Pandemic Pause Over, NYC’s Black Neighborhoods Brace for Foreclosures” *The City*, March 22, 2022

Asian Americans for Equality
Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development
Astoria Not for Sale
Bailey's Cafe
Biotech Without Borders
Black Trans Media
Bronx Community Land Trust
Brooklyn Cooperative Federal Credit Union
Brooklyn Level Up
Brownsville Partnership
Caribbean Equality Project
Carroll Gardens Association
Catholic Migration Services
Center for Family Life in Sunset Park
Center for New York City Neighborhoods
Chhaya CDC
Chinatown Community Land Trust
The Chocolate Factory Theater
Churches United for Fair Housing
Community Allies
Community and Worker Ownership Project at CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies
Community Resource Exchange
Community Service Society of New York
Community Solutions
Community Voices Heard
Cooper Square Committee
Cooperative Economics Alliance of NYC
Cooper Square Community Land Trust
Cooper Square Mutual Housing Association II, HDFC
Crown Heights Tenant Union
Custom Collaborative
CUNY School of Law Community & Economic Development Clinic
DSA Queens Housing Working Group
East Harlem/El Barrio Community Land Trust
East New York Community Land Trust
East New York 4 Gardens
East River Park Action
El Puente de Williamsburg
Flatbush Tenant Coalition
The Flatbush Workshop for Design
For the Many
Goddard Riverside
Green Map System
Grow Brownsville

GrowHouse NYC
Hester Street
Housing Court Answers
Housing Conservation Coordinators
Housing Justice for All
Housing Organizers for People Empowerment of East Brooklyn
Housing Rights Initiative
Housing Rights Project at CUNY Law
Housing Works
IMPACCT Brooklyn
Inclusiv
Southside United HDFC- Los Sures
League of Independent Theater
LEAPS (Limited Equity and Affordability at Penn South)
Lower East Side People's Federal Credit Union
Malikah
MinKwon Center for Community Action
Mothers on the Move / Madres en Movimiento
Mott Haven Port Morris Community Land Stewards
Neighborhood Housing Services of Brooklyn CDC, Inc.
New Destiny Housing Corp.
New Economy Project
New Immigrant Community Empowerment
New York City Community Land Initiative
NYC Youth Sports Podcast Show Inc.
New Yorkers for Culture & Arts
NY Muslim Organizing Collective
North Star Fund
Northern Manhattan Community Land Trust
Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition
Not One More Block
NYC Arts in Education Roundtable
NYC HDFC
Parsons Housing Justice Lab
Picture the Homeless
Pratt Center for Community Development
Public Ceramics
Q Gardens Community Farm
ReAL Edgemere Community Land Trust
Right to Counsel NYC Coalition
Riverside Edgecombe Neighborhood Association
South Bronx Unite
Stabilizing NYC
St. Nicks Alliance

STooPS Art & Community
Street Vendor Project, Urban Justice Center
The Supportive Housing Network of New York
TakeBackNYC
TakeRoot Justice
Tenants and Neighbors
Tenants Political Action Committee
Theatre of the Oppressed NYC
The Mothership NYC
This Land is Ours Community Land Trust
Urban Homesteading Assistance Board
United Neighbors Organization
Universe City
Urban Justice Center - Safety Net Project
Village Preservation
WE ACT for Environmental Justice
We Are Not Afraid Community Resource Center
We Stay/Nos Quedamos
Western Queens Community Land Trust
Woodside on the Move
Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice

cc:

NYC Public Advocate Jumaane D. Williams
NYC Council Member Pierina Ana Sanchez
NYC Council Member Carlina Rivera
NYC Council Member Lincoln Restler