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Stringer Targets Dirty Oil Polluting Affordable Housing

June 6, 2011 2:49pm

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Borough President Scott Stringer says two-thirds of boilers that burn polluting heating oil are in rent-regulated buildings.

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Borough President Scott Stringer says two-third of boilers that burn polluting heating oil are in rent-regulated buildings. (DNAinfo/Leslie Albrecht)

By **Leslie Albrecht**

DNAinfo Reporter/Producer

UPPER WEST SIDE — Borough President Scott Stringer took aim at what he called New York's "No. 1 polluter" Monday, calling on the city to eliminate dirty heating oil.

Buildings that burn No. 6 and No. 4 heating oil belch black smoke that Stringer says contributes to 3,000 deaths a year. The smog, visible in sooty clouds hovering above older buildings, does more damage to Manhattan's air quality than cars and trucks combined, Stringer said.

Under a new city rule, landlords have to stop using the polluting heating oil over the next few years, but Stringer says he wants faster action.

"This is a health emergency," Stringer said. "We cannot wait."

Tenants in affordable housing are more likely to be affected by the pollution, Stringer said. Two-thirds of the boilers that burn the polluting oil are in buildings with rent-regulated units, according to a new study by Stringer's office.

"What you end up having is a population of working people who have to stay in these buildings where these toxins are emitted for generations," Stringer said at a Monday press conference in front of Park West Village, a West 97th Street affordable housing complex where all six buildings burn dirty heating oil.

The Upper West Side's 10025 zip code is home to 218 dirty boilers in rent-regulated buildings, according to Stringer's study. The neighborhood also has many older residents who are more vulnerable to health problems caused by air pollution, Stringer said.

Replacing the boilers to burn cleaner fuel costs about \$125,000 each, and Stringer says lower-income tenants shouldn't be forced to pay for those upgrades.

Stringer said he's identified "buckets of money" that could help landlords pay for replacing old boilers.

The city has a loan program to help landlords pay for converting boilers, but Stringer said that's not enough. He said he wants more abatements and incentives to help landlords make the switch to cleaner fuel.

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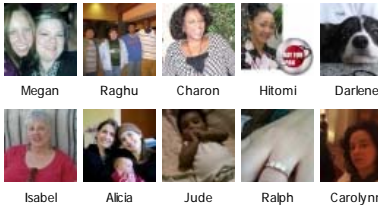




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