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**WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF  
THE ANIMAL LAW COMMITTEE  
OF THE NEW YORK CITY BAR ASSOCIATION  
IN SUPPORT OF INTRO. 1378-2019**

**The New York City Council  
Committee on Health**

Tuesday, June 18, 2019, 10:00 a.m.

My name is Marissa Hight and I am a New York attorney testifying on behalf of the New York City Bar Association’s Animal Law Committee. We urge the Committee on Health to vote in favor of Intro. 1425, which would prohibit operating carriage horses once the National Weather Services “Heat Index” reaches ninety degrees.

The Animal Law Committee supports Intro. 1425 because it better protects carriage horses from New York’s hot and humid weather and, by doing so, furthers animal welfare in our community.

The bill requires use of the National Weather Service’s Heat Index to determine when it is too hot for carriage horses to be worked. The Heat Index measures how hot it “really” feels when relative humidity is combined with air temperature. For example, if the air temperature is 88 degrees and relative humidity is 80%, then the Heat Index, or “real feel” temperature, is 106 degrees. This makes intuitive sense: as any New Yorker knows, humidity makes a hot day feel hotter.

By tying heat restrictions to the “real feel” temperature, the bill extends the City’s history of protecting carriage horses from the elements. The City’s first significant legislation regulating the carriage horse industry — enacted thirty years ago this year — was introduced in response to several incidents where carriage horses collapsed or died during heat waves. Heat restrictions have remained substantively unchanged since then, despite the danger that heat continues to pose to carriage horses, which can be worked up to nine hours in any twenty-four hour period, seven days a week. The full extent of the danger is difficult to assess, as existing law does not require drivers to report heat-induced collapses.

We note that Department of Health and Mental Hygiene heat regulations account for humidity to some extent: carriage horses may not be driven once the “wet bulb” temperature has reached 85 degrees. Yet the wet bulb metric can differ significantly from the real-feel temperature measured by the Heat Index. For instance, an 86-degree air temperature in 90% relative humidity means a wet bulb temperature of just over 83 degrees, conditions in which

carriage horses could still work. Using the Heat Index, however, those same conditions “really feel” like 105 degrees. According to the National Weather Service, that poses a danger of heat disorders with prolonged exposure or strenuous activity.

In summary, Intro. 1425 would better protect New York’s carriage horses and further the City’s animal welfare goals. The New York City Bar Association’s Animal Law Committee therefore urges the Committee on Health to vote in favor of the bill. Our written comment provides additional reasons for our position and includes citations to relevant laws and supporting evidence.

Thank you.