



United States House of Representatives
One Hundred Nineteenth Congress
Committee on Financial Services
2129 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

November 12, 2025

Lisa Bova-Hiatt
Chief Executive Officer
New York City Housing Authority
90 Church Street, 11th Floor
New York, NY 10007

Dear Ms. Bova-Hiatt:

The House Committee on Financial Services (Committee) writes to express its concern following the recent explosion and partial collapse of the building you manage at 205 Alexander Avenue. The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) has a history of documented deficiencies in its properties, which it has struggled to resolve over the past decade.¹ The recent partial collapse of the 205 Alexander Avenue property further calls into question NYCHA's management and upkeep of its public housing properties.²

In 2018, federal prosecutors from the Southern District of New York (SDNY) sued NYCHA on the basis that its housing facilities were largely deficient and posed health and safety risks to a substantial number of residents.³ Specifically, SDNY argued that NYCHA persistently failed to adequately address safety risks, such as lead paint and mold.⁴ SDNY also noted that, during the 2017-2018 winter, more than 80 percent of residents living in NYCHA-managed public housing went without heat.⁵ NYCHA, the Department of Housing and Urban

¹ See, e.g., Press Release, U.S. Dep't of Justice, Manhattan U.S. Attorney Announces Settlement with NYCHA and NYC To Fundamentally Reform NYCHA Through the Appointment Of a Federal Monitor and the Payment By NYC Of \$1.2 Billion Of Additional Capital Money Over the Next Five Years (Jun. 11, 2018), <https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdny/pr/manhattan-us-attorney-announces-settlement-nycha-and-nyc-fundamentally-reform-nycha>; MONITOR'S FINAL QUARTERLY REPORT FOR THE NEW YORK CITY HOUSING AUTHORITY, OFFICE OF THE NYCHA FEDERAL MONITOR BART M. SCHWARTZ, 3 (2024).

² Mihir Zaveri, et al., *20-Story Public Housing Building the Bronx Partly Collapses*, N.Y. TIMES (Oct. 1, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/10/01/nyregion/bronx-explosion-building-collapse.html>.

³ Compl., *United States v. New York City Housing Authority*, 1:18 CV 05213 (S.D.N.Y. June 11, 2018).

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ Press Release, U.S. Dep't of Justice, Manhattan U.S. Attorney Announces Settlement with NYCHA and NYC To Fundamentally Reform NYCHA Through the Appointment Of a Federal Monitor and the Payment By NYC Of \$1.2 Billion Of Additional Capital Money Over the Next Five Years (Jun. 11, 2018), <https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdny/pr/manhattan-us-attorney-announces-settlement-nycha-and-nyc-fundamentally-reform-nycha>.

Development (HUD), and SDNY ultimately agreed to a settlement.⁶ As part of that agreement, NYCHA admitted to “egregiously failing to provide decent, safe, and sanitary living conditions.”⁷ It also admitted that it hid substandard conditions from inspectors and repeatedly made false statements to cover up the conditions in New York City public housing.⁸ NYCHA agreed to the appointment of a federal monitor to review NYCHA housing for a five-year period.⁹

During his monitorship, the HUD-appointed monitor, Bart Schwartz, identified a pattern of corrupt practices that undermined the ability of NYCHA to resolve health and safety issues identified by residents, in addition to the issues already highlighted by SDNY and HUD.¹⁰ At the conclusion of the five-year monitorship term, HUD determined that NYCHA had made insufficient progress in resolving the issues identified by SDNY, HUD, and Mr. Schwartz, thereby necessitating another five-year monitorship.¹¹

This history calls into question whether the incident at 205 Alexander Avenue could have been avoided. Current reporting on the incident at 205 Alexander Avenue suggests that a gas explosion was triggered when the building turned on its heating system, resulting in the building’s chimney collapsing.¹² Notably, NYCHA has repeatedly been found to have deficient and antiquated heating systems.¹³

The 205 Alexander Avenue building has also been subject to multiple reported violations of New York housing standards. In both 2020 and 2024, the New York City Department of Buildings cited the 205 Alexander Avenue building for having unsafe facades.¹⁴ Further, HUD inspection data from 2019 and 2025 indicate that the Mitchel facilities, of which 205 Alexander

⁶ Press Release, U.S. Dep’t of Justice, Manhattan U.S. Attorney Announces New Agreement for Fundamental Reform at NYCHA (Jan. 31, 2019), <https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdny/pr/manhattan-us-attorney-announces-new-agreement-fundamental-reform-nycha>.

⁷ MONITOR’S FINAL QUARTERLY REPORT FOR THE NEW YORK CITY HOUSING AUTHORITY, OFFICE OF THE NYCHA FEDERAL MONITOR BART M. SCHWARTZ, 3 (2024).

⁸ MONITOR’S FINAL QUARTERLY REPORT FOR THE NEW YORK CITY HOUSING AUTHORITY, OFFICE OF THE NYCHA FEDERAL MONITOR BART M. SCHWARTZ, 3 (2024).

⁹ Press Release, U.S. Dep’t of Justice, Manhattan U.S. Attorney Announces New Agreement for Fundamental Reform at NYCHA (Jan. 31, 2019), <https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdny/pr/manhattan-us-attorney-announces-new-agreement-fundamental-reform-nycha>.

¹⁰ Frank Runyeon, Bart Schwartz Named NYCHA’s New Monitor by Feds, New York Daily News (Feb. 22, 2019), <https://www.nydailynews.com/2019/02/22/bart-schwartz-named-nychas-new-monitor-by-feds/>; MONITOR’S FINAL QUARTERLY REPORT FOR THE NEW YORK CITY HOUSING AUTHORITY, OFFICE OF THE NYCHA FEDERAL MONITOR BART M. SCHWARTZ, 3, 20 (2024).

¹¹ NEW YORK CITY HOUSING AUTHORITY MONITORSHIP, OFFICE OF THE NYCHA FEDERAL MONITOR, 4 (2025).

¹² CeFaan Kim, *Residents say they're still without gas 3 weeks after explosion, building collapse in the Bronx*, ABC NEWS 7 (Oct. 23, 2025) <https://abc7ny.com/post/bronx-residents-say-gas-weeks-explosion-building-collapse/18063774/>.

¹³ See Generally MONITOR’S FINAL QUARTERLY REPORT FOR THE NEW YORK CITY HOUSING AUTHORITY, OFFICE OF THE NYCHA FEDERAL MONITOR BART M. SCHWARTZ (2024).

¹⁴ New York City Department of Buildings, 022020 FISP HAZ 88834 (Feb. 20, 2020); New York City Department of Buildings 022224 FIS PNR 00469 (Feb. 22, 2024).

Avenue is a part, received consistently low scores.¹⁵ For example, in 2019, the Mitchel property's inspection showed that it was non-compliant with HUD's minimum standards.¹⁶ The low scored received in 2019 should have subjected the Mitchel property to annual HUD-approved inspections. Unfortunately, there is limited public data on other inspections taking place from 2020 and 2024.

Public housing residents—like all residents—deserve safe and clean housing devoid of hazards. While, thankfully, the recent explosion did not result in any injuries, at least 38 families were asked to vacate their residences and all residents were temporarily without gas.¹⁷ The explosion, collapse, and substandard living conditions that these residents have experienced are unacceptable and must be remedied immediately. NYCHA's inability or unwillingness to satisfy its contractual obligations to HUD's health and safety requirements may make these types of incidents more common.

To ensure public housing residents have access to safe and sanitary housing, the Committee seeks information regarding NYCHA's management and inspection process for its public housing facilities. The Committee requests your written answers and relevant supporting documents to the following questions by Wednesday, November 26, 2025.

Explosion and Collapse of the Mitchel Property

1. What has NYCHA identified as the cause of the initial gas explosion?
2. What has NYCHA done to provide temporary support for Mitchel property residents that were forced to vacate their residences?

Prior Inspections & Remediation at the Mitchel Property

3. In its 2019 Inspection, the Mitchel property scored 54 out of a possible 100 points; this score is below HUD's threshold for a passing score. For what reason(s) did this property receive a failing score?
 - a. What steps has NYCHA taken to help improve the conditions at this property?
4. In its 2025 Inspection, the Mitchel property scored 64 out of 100 on HUD's updated NSPIRE scoring system. What deficiencies were cited by the inspector in the 2025 inspection?

¹⁵ *Physical Inspection Scores*, U.S. Dep't of Housing & Urban Dev. (Aug. 25, 2025), <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/pis.html> (Inspection scores below 80 out of 100 requires PHA's undergo annual physical inspections in addition to the required annual self-inspection. HUD considers scores of 59 or lower to be a failing score).

¹⁶ *Id.* (HUD requires a score of 60 out of 100 or higher to pass inspections).

¹⁷ Christina Fan, *Bronx Partial Building Collapse has Some Residents Scared to Return*, CBS News (Oct. 2, 2025), <https://www.cbsnews.com/newyork/news/bronx-collapse-investigation/>.

- a. What steps has NYCHA taken to help improve the conditions at this property?
5. Between March 2019 and May 2025, when was the Mitchel property subject to a HUD inspection?
 - a. What scores did the Mitchel property receive in these inspections?
 - b. For each identified violation, what steps has NYCHA taken to help improve the conditions identified?
 - c. Please provide a copy of all inspection reports or scoresheets for each inspection.
6. In 2020 and 2024, the New York Department of Buildings issued citations to the Mitchel project regarding the building's facade. What was the nature of these citations?
 - a. Did these deficiencies contribute to the collapse of the chimney?
 - b. Please provide a copy of all citations.

NYCHA Oversight and Management of its Property

7. How does NYCHA ensure and track the safety of its heating systems?
8. Does NYCHA intend to inspect the heating systems in its other buildings to ensure they are safe?
9. How is NYCHA working to ensure the structural safety of surrounding buildings and buildings of a similar age and wear?
10. For the purposes of HUD-required inspections, how does NYCHA select the sample units that will be inspected?
11. What issues identified in the 2018 settlement agreement with the SDNY and HUD does NYCHA still need to resolve?
12. Mr. Schwartz's final monitor's report indicates that the heating systems within NYCHA housing are often outdated and rundown, how will NYCHA facilitate the modernization of heating systems in the buildings it manages?
13. Provide a list of all resident complaints NYCHA has received regarding the 205 Alexander Avenue property since January 1, 2020, including (a) the nature of the complaint, and (b) whether the complaint has been closed.

The Committee also requests a staff-level briefing on these issues. Please contact Alex Albrecht of the House Committee on Financial Services majority staff at Alex.Albrecht@mail.house.gov to schedule the briefing as soon as possible, but no later than Wednesday, November 26, 2025. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



French Hill
Chairman



Dan Meuser
Chairman
Subcommittee on Oversight and
Investigations



Mike Flood
Chairman
Subcommittee on Housing and
Insurance



Andrew Garbarino
Member of Congress



Mike Lawler
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Maxine Waters, Ranking Member
The Honorable Al Green, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Oversight and
Investigations
The Honorable Emanuel Cleaver, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Housing and
Insurance