

New York City Council



Council Member David Yassky



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Bill Introduced to Legalize Beekeeping in New York City

January 28, 2009. New York, NY: City Council Member David Yassky introduced a bill today that would create a process for beekeeper licensing in New York City.

Currently beekeeping is illegal in New York City due to health code section 161.01, which prohibits the possession, keeping, harboring and selling of "wild animals." This ban includes bees in its listing of "all venomous insects" and in doing so outlaws beekeeping.

This city-wide beekeeping ban continues to exist, despite the creation of federal policy which promotes beekeeping — such as the Pollinator Habitat Protection Act Of 2007 and Pollinator Protection Act of 2007 — and a push by other cities such as Atlanta, Chicago, Portland, San Francisco and Seattle to have policies that support urban beekeeping. Even New York State's own apiary policy promotes beekeeping and requires beekeepers to register their hives with the New York Department of Agriculture.

To create a licensing process for beekeepers in New York City, Council Member David Yassky is sponsoring an amendment to the City's administrative code. Under the new licensing process, the Commissioner of Health will have powers to issue, deny, suspend and revoke licenses, as well as penalize non-compliant beekeepers. To get a license, and in accordance with New York State licensing procedures, applicants must show proof of age (over 21 years), intended use for the bees, location of their apiary, and a detailed description of the safety measures to be implemented. This non-transferable license will be valid for two years. The new licensing process would trump the health code's overall prohibition of bees.

More information, including ways to support this legislation, can be found on www.justfood.org/issues.

Just Food

Just Food is a non-profit working to create a just and sustainable food system for the New York City region, supporting small-scale urban and regional farmers and advocating to make healthy, affordable, and sustainably-grown food accessible to all New Yorkers.

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Serving District 33 in his second term, Council Member David Yassky is among the City Council's leading advocates for education reform, affordable housing, crime prevention, waterfront revitalization and the environment.

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