



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

Addabbo Legislation to Address Fire Hazards Associated WITH Cock Lofts in Residences Passes Senate

JOSEPH P. ADDABBO JR June 30, 2014

Queens, NY (June 30, 2014): In an effort to create a safer home environment and to help homeowners who have hazardous cock lofts in their residences that may present significant fire hazards, State Senator Joseph Addabbo, Jr. recently sponsored and passed legislation (S.5944) at the end of the State Senate session to provide incentives for the removal of these dangerous structures.

Addabbo initially introduced the legislation in the wake of a raging five-alarm blaze in Middle Village in 2013 which damaged seven homes, injured 11 firefighters, and may have been intensified by the existence of cock lofts in the structures. Cock lofts are often found in row houses and are generally defined as large concealed spaces between the top floor ceiling and the underside of the roof deck on homes.

“At the time of the local fire, I decided to introduce legislation to aid homeowners in making structural modifications to their properties to eliminate these serious fire hazards,” said Addabbo, who represents Middle Village in the State Senate. “Over the years, there has been growing evidence that cock lofts lead to extremely fast moving and hard-to-control flames that put both residents and firefighters at extreme risk, and we need to address these dangers.”

Under Addabbo’s legislation, residents whose homes contain cock lofts would be able to apply for tax credits to repair them. Credits of up to \$500 would aid eligible homeowners in affording the cost of making the improvements and eliminating the fire hazards.

Addabbo noted that the ferocity of the September 9, 2013 Middle Village fire was said at the time to be related to these structures. In July 2013, a firefighter in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, was also injured when the presence of a cock loft elevated the fire in the building to a three-alarm blaze, and many other similar situations related to these attic structures have been reported over the years.

“Clearly, if we can do something to address the serious dangers that cock lofts now pose to our residents and emergency personnel, we should do it,” said Addabbo, noting that about 200 firefighters were called

to battle the 2013 Middle Village inferno. “This legislation seeks to lend a hand to homeowners who might otherwise be unable to afford the improvements. In turn, we will be able to provide safer neighborhoods for all of us, and very possibly save lives and prevent unspeakable tragedies.”

Addabbo noted that connected row houses are no longer designed and built with cocklofts owing to their dangerous ability to allow flames to move quickly from building to building.

“So now it’s time to take aim at the cocklofts that still exist and should be closed off,” he said. Addabbo hopes in the future, the State Assembly will also join him in passing this legislation, an issue he intends to keep as one of his priorities.