



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

Release: Addabbo Legislation to Address Fire Hazards Associated With Cock Lofts in Residences Passes Senate

JOSEPH P. ADDABBO JR. June 26, 2015

Queens, NY (June 26, 2015) In order to help out homeowners who have hazardous cock lofts in their residences that may present significant fire hazards, NYS Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. sponsors legislation (S.3005) that was recently approved by the State Senate 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 that damaged seven homes, injured 11 firefighters and may have been exacerbated by the existence of cock lofts in the structures. Since that fire in Middle Village, subsequent recent fires in December 2014 damaging dwellings in Ozone Park on 97th Street and in March 2015 destroying a row of Woodhaven houses on 90th Street have made the legislation grow in importance for Addabbo. 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 that time, 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 a 30 percent tax credit to repair them. Refundable 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 attic 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. More recently, a huge blaze in Manhattan on 66th Street and 1st Avenue erupted in a building containing a cockloft in March, and a Brooklyn fire in April broke out in three row houses connected by a cockloft.

“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.

Now that it has been approved by the State Senate, the legislation is under review by the Assembly Ways and Means Committee.