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## NYC Local Law 97 carbon emission rules finalized, blasted by environmentalists

Téa Kvetenadze, New York Daily News

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The Adams administration Monday released the [final set of rules](#) for [Local Law 97](#), a measure meant to cap harmful greenhouse gas emissions, but some environmental activists blasted the rules as giving landlords too much [wiggle room](#).

[Local Law 97](#) requires some 50,000 large buildings across the city to limit their carbon pollution or face steep fines starting in 2025, with stiffer restrictions going into effect beginning in 2030.

While conservation groups broadly support the legislation, some have [protested](#) for [months](#) against stipulations in the now-finalized second rule package that allow for building owners who aren't in compliance to get a two-year extension if they make a "good faith effort."

"Our administration is working tirelessly to reduce harmful carbon greenhouse gas emissions from every sector, including buildings — our city's largest source of emissions," Mayor Adams said in a statement.

"Our 'Getting 97 Done' plan and these rules will help buildings go green and save green, and it's all a part of our overall strategy to build a more sustainable, resilient city so New Yorkers are safer from the effects of climate change in the future."

Shortly after the regulations published Monday a coalition of activist groups released a [joint statement](#) blasting what they called "massive loopholes" in the law.

"Under Mayor Adams' rules for real estate, owners of New York City's most polluting buildings will opt to delay or entirely avoid pollution reductions, leaving New Yorkers breathing more pollution, losing good jobs, and paying higher utility bills," said the group, which included Food & Water Watch, New York Communities for Change, the New York Public Interest Research Group and TREEage.

They said the new rules were to the benefit of "big donors in the real estate lobby while leaving the rest of us out in the cold."

[Hundreds](#) attended a virtual public meeting in October to discuss the draft version of the rules, with many [testifying](#) the "good faith" allowances would weaken Local Law 97. The finalized second package shared Monday included some tweaks based on public comment but no major changes.

“Good faith” provisions were included in the original text of the law when it passed in 2019. Under the final rules, owners can be granted mitigated penalties in the event of “unexpected or unforeseeable” incidents such as a fire or flooding.

But they can also get an extension if they take certain steps to prove they’re on track to be in compliance by 2026, including developing a decarbonization plan. Those who do will not be able to purchase [controversial renewable energy credits](#) to help them meet their emission targets.

The city has cited pandemic disruptions in calling for flexibility, and large organizations including the Regional Plan Association and New York League of Conservation Voters say the good faith allowance strikes a balance between meeting climate goals and [helping smaller owners comply](#) with the rules.

“The rules for Good Faith Efforts are a balanced and carefully considered approach to getting as many property owners as possible to implement energy efficiency retrofits in their buildings,” said Elizabeth Crowley, president of the Building Trades Employers’ Association.

The vast majority of affected buildings — approximately 89% — are already in compliance with the benchmarks set to go into effect on January 1.

Eric Weltman is an organizer with Food & Water Watch and has spent months protesting against what he sees as “loopholes” in the regulations. He said keeping good faith caveats in the final rules is a blow to the legislation’s stated goals.

“It will still have a tremendous impact,” he said of the law. “Just less of one than it could and should and needs to.”

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