FILE NAME: Newspaper & Magazine Articles (NMA)

DATE: 1966 May 13

DOC#: NMA044

DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION: NYT - Mayor to Revive Air Pollution Board

By PETER KIHSS
New York Times (1857-Current file); May 13, 1966; ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1851 - 2
pg. 62

Mayor to Revive Air Pollution Board

By PETER KIHSS

Mayor Lindsay declared yesterday he would revive what he called the "dormant" Board of Air Pollution Control as a policymaker. He named Robert A. Fox, a 34-year-old chemical engineer, to fill a board post that had been vacant seven years.

Arthur J. Benline, Commissioner of Air Pollution Control, asserted later, however, that "the board has not been dormant." He held its "most important contribution" had been development of a comprehensive new control code in 1964.

The city's air was not only polluted but turbulent with criticisms yesterday. Councilman Robert A. Low, Democrat-Liberal of Manhattan, charged the Mayor with an "ill-advised" proposal to cut funds for the Health Research Council.

During a ceremony in which he received a merit award from the Public Health Association of New York City, Mr. Low reported "remarkable results" by the research agency's working group on air pollution.

A study of construction worker deaths, he said, had pinpointed asbestos dust as a cause of lung and peritoneal cancer. Six lives had been saved by early detection and surgery, he said, and steps were being taken to reduce a danger to which 400,000 New Yorkers may be exposed.

A Republican, State Senator Whitney North Seymour Jr. of Manhattan, issued a memorandum branding Governor Rockefeller's May 2 air pollution proposals as lacking in leadership and "essentially a mimicry" of Federal action.

The Governor, Mr. Seymour contended, failed to grapple with an urgent need for state action against automotive air pollution. The Senator urged state research to develop "new power sources for vehicles," a marketable exhaust control, and controls over dust from tire, brake and road wear, along with highway and traffic planning to eliminate urban congestion.

The antipollution board here consists of the Commissioners of Air Pollution Control, Health and Buildings and two members appointed by the Mayor for four-year terms. The chart says regular meetings "shall be held at least once every month."

5/13/66

In a statement, Mayor Lindsay declared he intended to give the board "new importance" in working with Austin N. Heller, a Federal official who is to become antipollution commissioner July 1.

Mr. Fox, the new board member, served on the Mayor's task force on air pollution that reported this week. He is a senior project engineer for the Columbia Gas System Service Corporation, and designed air and water pollution controls for a petro-chemical complex constructed in Frankfort, Germany.

Meetings Held Benline Says

Commissioner Benline commented that he had notified Mayor Lndsay early in January about a vacancy in the nonofficial post since Richard A. Wolff had become his departmental deputy in 1963. Mr. Benline said he held frequent telephone conferences with board members, and there had been formal meetings in Novvember, February and March, while the 1964 code work saw as many as three and four sessions a week.

Councilman Low, whose merit award was for "persistent and productive efforts" against air pollution, said the board's 1964 code embodied "the most advanced regulations in the United States—the difficulty has been in enforcement."

In a ceremony at the New York Academy of Medicine, 2 East 103d Street, Mr. Low noted the Mayor's new budget proposed a $500,000 cut in the Health Research Council's $8-million budget. The Mayor called this a move "to phase out of the program those research grants which are of national, rather than local concern."

But Mr. Low said "the city's investment in research has acted as 'seed money'." In five years, he said, the city had appropriated $17.7-million, which resulted in attracting $97-million in Federal, state and private funds for the programs.

Without city support of health research, Mr. Low cited estimates that "as many as 200 doctors would leave the city's hospital-medical-school system, along with 486 assisting technical personnel" in favor of new medical institutions elsewhere.