



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas K. Duane

Shutting Down UWS 'Illegal Hotel'

THOMAS K. DUANE June 5, 2012

When a local block association president alerted me to an illegal transient occupancy unit (TOU), or “illegal hotel,” on her block, my office contacted the director of the Mayor’s Office of Special Enforcement, the agency which has the task of investigating and prosecuting operators of such illegal units. Shortly after our outreach, the landlord received six Environmental Control Board violations for the TOUs and related conditions. As you may know, the issue of TOUs is one that I and many other elected officials have worked to resolve for years. Nearly two years ago, we were able to pass legislation, sponsored by New York State Senator Liz Krueger and New York State Assemblymember Dick Gottfried and crafted as a result of the Illegal Hotel Task Force that I helped create, that made it easier for City agencies to enforce the law barring the short-term, transient use of apartments designated as permanent residences, but TOUs remain a serious problem. Recently my office convened a meeting with the Mayor’s Office of Special Enforcement to identify ways to make it easier for the office to do its job and to ensure these cases are resolved expeditiously. Like many matters of enforcement, it is dependent on timely and well-documented complaints; if you believe there is an “illegal hotel” operating in your building or in a neighbor’s building, please call 311 and forward the complaint number to my office.