

DOB hasn't collected \$1.6B in quality-of-life fines

Violations don't hold up landlords, developers from continuing construction
March 28, 2016 11:02AM

[◀ PREVIOUS](#) [NEXT ▶](#)

The city is issuing plenty of fines to landlords and developers for construction infractions, but it lacks the teeth to collect the \$1.6 billion it's owed.

Landlords and developers see the quality-of-life fines, known as Environmental Control Board violations, as the cost of doing business, said City Council member Ben Kallos.

Kallos is sponsoring legislation to give the Department of Finance more power to collect the fines.

"The city issues quality-of-life violations when people violate construction safety rules, start construction before or after hours, or have dangerous sidewalk conditions — and nobody seems to care," Kallos told Crain's.

Last year, landlord Steven Croman and his firm, 9300 Realty, had more than \$1 million in unpaid fines on his properties, according to Cooper Square Committee's research. Despite the fines — some of which are seven years old — Croman got the city's permission for construction on his buildings, Crain's reported.

A 9300 Realty spokesman told Crain's the firm has paid hundreds of thousands of dollars to the city since Cooper Square's study and disputed the \$1 million figure. [Tenants sued Croman in 2014](#), claiming he went ahead with gut renovations that caused ceilings to collapse in occupied apartments.

The Department of Buildings, which issues the fines, checks to see whether the violation has been corrected when issuing new permits for construction.

"Denying permits based on outstanding debt has the potential to drive work underground, making the department's regulatory enforcement efforts more challenging," Assistant Commissioner Patrick Wehle told a City Council hearing in November, Crain's reported. "Correcting unsafe conditions is more important than collecting a debt."

After a [crane collapse](#) in Tribeca killed one man in February, Mayor Bill de Blasio and Department of Buildings head Rick Chandler announced the city [would quadruple fines for serious safety lapses](#). [\[Crain's\] — Dusica Sue Malesevic](#)

Tags: [construction](#)



From left: Rick Chandler and Ben Kallos

