



News Bytes From Your Communities

East

Battle Royal Erupts Over NYCHA Status: New York state and city power centers are jockeying to prevent HUD from taking over the embattled New York City Housing Authority and its management of more than 400,000 tenants in 326 housing projects. HUD officials tell *HAL* after a Dec. 19-20 meeting in New York City that the NYCHA has no excuse for its mismanagement crisis where even now, in the dead of winter, hundreds of tenants are without heat. Meanwhile, city housing officials, aware of the problems for months, are sitting on a \$1 billion reserve account without any plan to spend it for boiler replacements or other emergency repairs. Sources say the deplorable conditions -- lack of heat (and air conditioning in the summer), hot water, mold and rodent infestation, and growing crime-- are the result of years of neglect with conditions masked by successive city administrations. The result is a repair and rehabilitation tab approaching \$30 billion. Federal Judge William Pauley in November rejected a proposed consent decree that would have required the NYCHA to remedy its lead paint crisis by spending \$1 billion more than budgeted to correct the problem and accept imposition of a federal monitor to ensure compliance. The NYHA now has until Jan. 31, 2019 to develop a new plan. Meanwhile, HUD Secretary Ben Carson is preparing to take the NYCHA into receivership in late January unless NYC Mayor Bill de Blasio (D) develops a reform plan that commits sufficient money and resources to turn public housing conditions around. Sources say Carson took de Blasio to the proverbial woodshed over the issue when the mayor paid a stealth visit to Washington to resolve the issue. But de Blasio's new plan, while committing up to \$24 billion to fight the decay, offered no explanation about how or when the money will be raised.