

# DAILY NEWS

## Newsstand cry: Tear up this law

**BY FRANK LOMBARDI**  
DAILY NEWS CITY HALL BUREAU

NEWSSTAND operators warned yesterday that 60 to 70 stands may be forced to close unless the city amends its “street furniture” law.

Representatives of the operators testified in favor of a new City Council bill to immediately repeal the law, known as Local Law 64 of 2003.

Backers of the bill charged that Mayor Bloomberg’s administration gave misleading assurances when the law was approved that only a dozen existing newsstands might be forced to move or close.

“The law we passed was passed with false information, with data that was not true,” said Councilwoman Margarita Lopez (D-Manhattan).

The law consolidated 3,500 bus shelters and 300 newsstands into a megafanchise that is on the verge of being awarded to a single bidder. The city expects to reap as much as \$400 million over the life of the 20-year franchise.

In return for advertising rights to the street furniture, the winning bidder is to build kiosk-like newsstands to replace all of the existing ones, which will continue to be operated by their current newsdealers. The franchise winner is also to erect 20 pay toilets.

Testifying for the repeal bill, Robert Bookman, counsel for the New York City Newsstand Operators Association, said, “[Local Law 64] will have a devastating impact on this industry, forcing dozens of newsstands — between 60 and 70, over 20% of the industry — out of business, some slowly, others right away.”

He cited “contradictory” requirements in the law that mandate that the new newsstands be wheelchair-accessible to their vendors, while at the same time meeting stringent size requirements so as not to impede pedestrian traffic.

After the hearing, Bookman illustrated his complaint about Local Law 64 at a press conference held by a tiny newsstand at the northwestern corner of Broadway and Chambers St.

If that stand expanded to permit wheelchair access, it would become too large for its narrow sidewalk location, or elsewhere within the permitted relocation area.

“I think I’ll be put out of business. And I’m worried,” said Mike Patel, 57, of Kew Gardens, Queens, who has run the newsstand for 22 years.

City officials did not testify on the new bill, citing continuing litigation over Local Law 64 with Bookman’s association.

*flombardi@nydailynews.com*