



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on June 27, 2023

Big Apple Takes Aim at Pizzerias With Coal or Wood Ovens

Historic New York City pizza joints could be forced to pony up thousands of dollars under a proposed city regulation aimed at reducing air pollution.

Pizzerias with coal- or wood-fired ovens are being targeted by the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for the exhaust from their chimneys.

“All New Yorkers deserve to breathe healthy air and wood and coal-fired stoves are among the largest contributors of harmful pollutants in neighborhoods with poor air quality,” DEP spokesman Ted Timbers said in a statement Sunday. “This common-sense rule, developed with restaurant and environmental justice groups, requires a professional review of whether installing emission controls is feasible.”



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According to the [New York Post](#):

Under the mandate, restaurants with coal-and-wood-fired ovens must hire an engineer or architect to assess the feasibility of installing emission controls devices to achieve a 75% reduction in particulate emissions.

If this report concludes that a reduction of 75% or more cannot be achieved, or that no emissions controls can be installed, it must identify any emission controls that could provide a reduction of at least 25% or an explanation for why no emission controls can be installed.

Given that the rule was enacted pursuant to a 2015 city ordinance signed by then-Mayor Bill de Blasio and drafted in consultation with “environmental justice groups,” one should hardly be surprised that it is particularly onerous.

“Oh, yeah, it’s a big expense!” Paul Giannone, owner of Paulie Gee’s Pizzeria in Brooklyn, told the *Post*. Giannone tried to get ahead of the mandate by installing an air scrubber in the chimney of his wood-fired oven. Since 2018, he said, he’s spent \$20,000 on the thing with no end in sight.

“Not only did I have to purchase the machine, I had to have an engineer look at where it could be installed. I had to get an electrician to run electricity to it. I had to get a plumber to run a water line because you have to have a hose to clean it,” he told [Fox News](#).

On top of that, “I got to pay somebody ... to go up there every couple of weeks and hose it down and ... do the maintenance,” he told the *Post*.

Giannone told Fox News that \$20,000 “could crush” some restaurateurs.



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“Why do I have to spend \$20,000? I’m paying a ton of taxes already,” Giannone said. “Regulation after regulation puts more pressure on us and makes it difficult to do business, particularly now with the cost of labor has gone up, the cost of the goods we have to buy to produce our products — it’s just making it more difficult.”

Other pizza purveyors worried that they would have to replace their coal- or wood-burning ovens with electric ones (gas would be a gamble since the city is [making war on it](#), too), which would affect the taste of their pies.

The new rule has been roundly criticized on social media, and one conservative activist, Scott LoBaido, made a [video](#) of himself lobbing pizza slices over the gates of city hall in protest, shouting, “Give us pizza or give us death!”

Asked about the regulation at a Monday press conference, Mayor Eric Adams [spoke](#) of his “love” for “vegan pizza with vegan cheese.”

“Everyone likes pizza,” he said. “You almost see that pie in front of you, you start to get happy. I think pizzas have saved more marriages than any other foods.”

“Let the public weigh in, let the public give their thoughts and then we’ll make the final determination,” he added. “We don’t want to hurt businesses in the city, and we don’t want to hurt the environment.”

Adams said he was going to call LoBaido and “tell him he needs to bring a vegan pie to me, so we can sit down, and I want to hear his side of this.”

Likening the smoke from pizza ovens to that from the recent Canadian wildfires, Adams said, “Every toxic entity that we remove from our air is adding up to the overall desire to deal with shrinking our carbon footprint.”

The wildfires “have wiped out nearly 18.7 million acres, according to the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre,” reported the [Post](#). “That’s over 29,000 square miles, or roughly half the size of New York state.”

The pizza rule, by contrast, is expected to affect fewer than 100 businesses, according to the DEP.

“I don’t know how much of a difference a hundred places is going to make,” Giannone told Fox News. “It’s a drop in the ocean.”

In fact, compared to the amount of carbon spewed by President Joe Biden’s “climate czar,” John Kerry, it’s microscopic. In a [Post op-ed](#), Marc Morano calculates that one would have to burn a wood-fired oven continuously for 849 years to churn out the same amount of carbon dioxide that Kerry’s private jet produces in a single year.

Furthermore, if the cost of installing and maintaining air filters forces pizza joints to switch to electric ovens, “CO₂ emissions will probably increase” thanks to the need to generate more electricity, physicist Dr. Will Happer told Morano.

Logic, of course, has never prevented the Left from implementing ruinous policies. But by threatening New Yorkers’ pizza, the “environmental justice” types may discover they’ve bitten off more than they can chew. As Nassau County Executive Bruce Blakeman [tweeted](#), “You don’t mess with a New Yorker’s Pizza or Bagels. Period.”



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