

If a couple files jointly, the apartment income tax is subjected to the rate. Additionally, city employees can't deduct that income tax from their federal tax returns.

"It's like double taxation, although they call it a waiver instead of a tax," said Robert Zink, the political director of the Patrolmen's Benevolent Association.

ment, a change could mean an estimated \$3,000 more in take-home pay annually, some union officials estimate, depending on the level of any new tax.

A spokesman for the city Finance Department did not return a call seeking comment.

This is not the first time the waiver system has

the suburbs — previously exempt — were suddenly hit with the resident income tax, Gorman said.

"We have a coalition of about 24 unions involved in this and we think we have a shot at making it happen," Gorman said.

Congressman Calls EPA Cleanup Plan a Charade

By Margaret Ramirez
STAFF WRITER

Attacking an apartment cleanup plan in lower Manhattan as a "charade," Congressman Jerrold Nadler said yesterday the federal government is avoiding stringent testing and cleanup measures and using inadequate methods to rid homes of World Trade Center dust.

To prove his point, Nadler spoke inside the still dust-filled two-bedroom condominium apartment of Ilona Kloupte.

Nadler said despite the visible ash and soot on the windowsills and heating system, an Environmental Protection Agency representative designated the apartment for a minimal "scope A" cleanup.

In guidelines set by EPA officials for the massive apartment cleanup plan, scope A cleanup consists of HEPA vacuuming and wet wiping of floors, walls, ceilings, and ledges. In

the second type of clean-up, scope B, in addition to Scope A cleaning, areas containing bulk dust are sealed off and exhaust fans equipped with HEPA filters are used so that no dust escapes.

"This is a public agency responsible for protecting public health," Nadler said. "By not aggressively testing and cleaning these apartments, they are putting the health of thousands of New Yorkers at risk."

After the Twin Towers collapsed, Kloupte, like hundreds of other residents, said she contacted city, state and federal officials for help cleaning her apartment. Instead, she said she was given a bucket and a mop.



Ilona Kloupte

For three days, she scooped dust out of her apartment. Weeks after, she developed a severe rash on her hands and face that doctors diagnosed as an allergic reaction to chromium. Her doctor ordered her to leave the apartment and she has been living in a shelter since then.

"The EPA came to the apartment and said this was household dust," Kloupte said.

She said she lost her job because of post-traumatic stress disorder.

"My life has been destroyed. I lost my job. I lost my health. I lost my home," Kloupte said.

Mary Mears, a spokeswoman for the EPA, said the agency continues to stand behind the lower Manhattan

apartment cleanup plan and believes that it meets the needs of residents to reduce the low risk of left-over dust.

In addition, Mears said the EPA was aware of Kloupte's situation and offered to clean her apartment but Kloupte refused. Since the Sept. 11 attacks, the EPA has been harshly criticized by lower Manhattan residents and politicians for its response. Initially, the EPA said they were not responsible for apartment cleanup. In May, agency officials reversed themselves and announced a massive apartment cleanup plan.

Last month, EPA officials released preliminary results of testing and cleanup, saying that the vast majority of apartments had no asbestos contamination.

Yesterday, Nadler blasted those results, saying the EPA is testing only for asbestos and no other toxins or other heavy metals.

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