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# De Blasio to Sue City for Data on Soaring Fines

By KATE TAYLOR

Bill de Blasio, the city's public advocate, said on Wednesday that he planned to sue Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and several city commissioners to compel them to turn over data on the city's revenue from fines.

The lawsuit would follow several months in which Mr. de Blasio has criticized the administration for what he has called an overly aggressive approach to issuing fines, which he said hurts small businesses and is driven by the city's hunger for revenue.

Revenue from fines collected by 20 agencies that regulate small businesses have grown by almost 70 percent in the decade since Mr. Bloomberg took office, to roughly \$820 million in fiscal year 2011 from about \$485 million in fiscal year 2002, according to an analysis by Mr. de Blasio's office.

In early May, Mr. de Blasio sent letters to six agencies asking for the number, type and dollar amount of fines they had issued in every year since 2002. He also asked if the agencies placed quotas on the number of violations issued or the amount of revenue collected by each inspector. He asked for a response by June 1.

In an interview, Mr. de Blasio said that two agencies, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and the Department of Consumer Affairs, had told his office they were working on a response; the other four, the Transportation Department, the Sanitation Department, the Buildings Department and the Finance Department, did not respond at all, he said.

Mr. de Blasio said the response was unacceptable, but typical; he said the administration had

on other occasions declined to provide him with information.

“We’re just not going to stand for it anymore,” he said. “It is the administration ignoring the mandate of the city charter that they have to be transparent with an oversight entity like the public advocate’s office. And we’ve decided there’s no choice now but to turn to litigation.”

A spokesman for the mayor, Marc LaVorgna, said the city would have all the data Mr. de Blasio had requested compiled soon. He said that a majority of the increase in fines over the last decade came from tickets issued to drivers, including parking tickets and moving violations, the fines for which have gone up, and tickets for running red lights, the number of which has jumped since the city installed more red-light cameras. He said that the remaining increase in fines was from the city’s efforts to make the city safer and cleaner.

“Restaurants are cleaner, construction sites are safer, fires have come down, and our streets are cleaner and safer than ever,” Mr. LaVorgna said. “That is a result of enforcing the regulations we have put in place and the laws the Council has passed.”

This is not the first time Mr. de Blasio, who is expected to run for mayor next year, has taken legal action against the administration. In May, he filed a friend-of-the-court brief in a lawsuit brought by a taxi industry group against the administration’s plan to create a new class of livery cabs. Mr. de Blasio said that the plan, passed by the State Legislature, was illegal because the City Council had not passed a home rule message giving the Legislature authority to approve it.