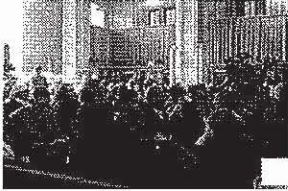


WNYC News Blog

# Wal-Mart Critics Rip Retailer During Hearing

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By Lisa Chow



wal-mart Hearing (Lisa Chow/WNYC)

Wal-Mart was ripped by sharp-tongued critics who oppose the retail giant's potential move into the city during a City Council hearing that drew more than 100 people to the former Emigrant Savings Bank in Lower Manhattan on Thursday.

The retailer, which has been mulling a move into the city, did not send a representative to the hearing and has not yet announced specific plans to open a store within the five boroughs but that did not stop naysayers from lashing out and protesting outside before the hearing shouting slogans like: "Down with Wal-Mart! Up with the people!"

"Wal-Mart is definitely not welcome in New York City," Councilwoman Melissa Mark-Viverito said. "It is a union-busting, tax-evading, wage-suppressing, job-destroying, civil rights-abusing, food stamp-denying, multinational corporation that has no place in New York City."

The Council said it's exploring legislative options to block Wal-Mart from opening a store in the city, but under city law a store only needs its approval if the space is more than 10,000-square feet in a manufacturing district. Wal-Mart has launched an aggressive PR campaign in New York but has yet to sign a lease.

"We will not be your slave workers in your plantation because that's what Wal-Mart is," Councilman Charles Barron said.

The mayor has supported Wal-Mart's interest in setting up shop in the five boroughs, pointing to studies that show city residents travel outside New York City to shop at Wal-Mart.

"This city should be open to business to anyone who wants to come here," Bloomberg said. "There is a big demand for shopping at Wal-Mart."

University of Illinois economist <sup>UIC</sup> David Merriman, whose testimony lasted nearly an hour, said Wal-Mart does not create new jobs. At a balance, he said, it's a wash.

New Yorkers! Meet the Candidate, Wal-Mart

When Wal-Mart Comes To Town

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