



NGOs, Health Experts Call on NYC to Utilize Diesel Alternatives

Switching to renewable natural gas could save the city money and help it reach its climate and air quality controls.

Waste360 Staff | May 18, 2018

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) including Energy Vision, the New York League of Conservation Voters, WE ACT for Environmental Justice and prominent health experts called on New York City to stop buying heavy-duty diesel vehicles for its municipal fleets and to adopt superior alternatives to diesel. Specifically, they are asking the city and Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) to take the following actions:

- Stop allocating funds for the purchase of new, heavy-duty diesel trucks and MTA diesel buses now.
- Focus new, heavy-duty vehicle purchases on the best diesel alternatives. Electric models are expensive and experimental, though worth piloting. Natural gas models, equipped with ultra-low-emission Near Zero engines running on renewable natural gas (RNG) fuel made from organic wastes, are the cleanest, lowest carbon and most cost-effective today.
- Make the necessary capital expenditures on infrastructure and fleet garage modifications to support the implementation of these alternatives.

London has already banned procurement of new diesel vehicles, and other major cities worldwide are restricting or eliminating them. In the U.S., many heavy-duty fleets have converted to RNG. Nationwide, 60 percent of the refuse trucks on order today are natural gas models that can run on RNG as well as compressed natural gas (CNG).

While other major cities have adopted RNG, New York City has not. Its municipal fleets currently have few natural gas trucks and none run on RNG. NYC agencies continue to rely on diesel vehicles, and their budgets call for buying hundreds more in the years ahead.

“That deserves to end now, and the budget process could help make it happen,” said Joanna

Underwood, founder and board member of Energy Vision, in a statement. “The City Council could play a leadership role by framing its budget guidelines so they encourage city agencies to seize the opportunities they have to deploy better alternatives for this world-class city.”

In City Council committee budget hearings in March, Energy Vision testified on the best strategies for replacing the city’s diesel vehicles. This week, Energy Vision sent the City Council and released publicly a new report on this topic called “[Ending the Diesel Era: Cleaner Fleets for a Healthier New York City](#).” It assembles the latest evidence showing why it is vital for the city to eliminate heavy-duty diesel vehicles and start adopting alternatives.

“New York is leaving one of its best resources for fighting climate change and improving public health on the table,” said Energy Vision President and co-author of the report Matt Tomich in a statement. “Doubling down on diesel when superior alternatives exist makes no sense. Nor does letting NYC's organic waste stream go to ‘waste’ instead of using it to produce RNG. The city spends \$400 million a year to ship its waste out of state; a third of which is organics. Instead of discarding them, New Yorkers would get powerful benefits from harnessing its organic wastes to produce RNG for its own fleets.”