



source: Energy Vision www.energy-vision.org

News Release

For immediate release

Contact: Stephen Kent, skent@kentcom.com, 914-589-5988

Advocates, New York Officials and Business Leaders Address Racial and Environmental Justice issues in the South Bronx

New Funding Offered for Clean Truck Technology and Fuels to Reduce Diesel Exhaust's Impacts on Bronx Air Quality and Respiratory Illness

[New York, NY – June 8, 2020] At a webinar this week sponsored by the non-profit [Energy Vision](http://www.energy-vision.org), the NYC Department of Transportation and Empire Clean Cities, **New York State Senator Alessandra Biaggi**, **WE ACT for Environmental Justice's Cecil Corbin-Mark**, City officials and business leaders addressed the environmental injustice of bad air quality and attendant respiratory health problems in the South Bronx arising from truck traffic and diesel exhaust.

They also discussed remedies, including clean truck technologies and fuels that can replace diesel, such as renewable natural gas (RNG) made from organic waste, which virtually eliminates health-damaging pollutants and is the lowest carbon fuel available today. And they reviewed new funding and financing programs to help fleets transition away from diesel, such as the just-launched NYC Clean Trucks program, and Clean Energy Fuel's Zero Now program.

"You can really draw a direct connection between the pollution that has poured into the communities in the South Bronx, which I represent, and the devastation that has been brought by COVID-19," said **Senator Biaggi**. "Breathing in polluted air day in and day out has led to exactly the kinds of comorbidities – such as asthma, heart disease and lung disease – that make you more vulnerable during the COVID-19 pandemic, and are issues that people living in the Bronx live with on a day-to-day basis. In many ways, COVID is really just a preview of the looming threat of climate change, but the Bronx is already living with the impacts of climate change and environmental racism."

"The events that have been taking place in our country over the last eight or nine days are triggered and catalyzed by the death of George Floyd," said **Cecil Corbin-Mark**, Deputy Director of WE ACT for Environmental Justice. "They are not only talking about the issues of policing which have to be addressed in our country, but for those of us in the environmental justice movement, we've been talking about air quality as it relates to health, climate and our communities. And it is time that we stop avoiding dealing with the heart of these issues, and the systemic racism that has pervaded this country for far too long."

"[The South Bronx] has suffered disproportionately from air pollution, from the concentration of waste facilities nearby and high bus and truck traffic on its thoroughfares, which has lowered air quality and impacted Bronx residents' health," said **Joanna Underwood**, founder of Energy Vision. "Today, our eyes have been opened more than ever to communities of color suffering unequally from coronavirus, partly

because of lower air quality and higher rates of underlying respiratory illness. Children in the South Bronx have rates of asthma almost twice the national average. With protests against racism sweeping the country now, we feel that for us, the way to confront and respond to the despair and anger welling up is to come together and try to tackle the manifold deep-seated problems one by one. Environmental justice and the racial dimensions of pollution and its public health threats are big ones”

The webinar offered information on replacing diesel trucks with clean trucks in the South Bronx. **Susan McSherry**, Director of the Alternative Fuels Program for the New York City Department of Transportation, detailed renewed grant funding available under the NYC Clean Trucks program. Eligible applicants can receive rebates from \$12,000 up to \$185,000 per truck for retiring old diesel vehicles and replacing them with those using the newest cleanest technology. New truck offerings include battery electric, zero emission vehicles, compressed natural gas with diesel-electric or plug in hybrid diesel.

In addition to public funding sources, Clean Energy, the leading provider of natural gas fuel for transportation launched its [Zero Now](#) program to provide financing to help fleet owners convert to renewable natural gas. “The company is offering up to \$40,000 toward purchase of ultra-clean natural gas trucks – both medium- and heavy-duty – powered by renewable natural gas fuel,” said **Mark Riley**, Clean Energy’s Vice President for Canada and the Eastern US. “It also offers exclusive truck pricing, and a five-year fuel cost certainty through either discounts or indexed offer of diesel fuel.” Last year in the Hunts Point neighborhood of the South Bronx, Clean Energy opened the first natural gas vehicle fueling station in New York City to sell RNG exclusively.

Joy Gardner, Executive Director of Empire Clean Cities, an NGO and U.S. Department of Energy designated Clean Cities Coalition, presented additional tools and resources that can help fleet owners analyze and plan conversion to clean truck technology, including funding and incentive programs, vehicle search tools, station locators and online calculators. “If you’re thinking about making the transition to alternative fuels, [these tools] can help fleet managers calculate cost savings and emissions reductions, and provide you with some public recognition for improving air quality in your region,” she said.

Manhattan Beer, the largest single market beverage distributor in the U.S., has a fleet of nearly 400 heavy-duty trucks, and was an early adopter of CNG and now RNG. “Since our trucks are equipped to run on CNG or RNG, we are taking advantage of the new Clean Energy station,” said **Juan Corcino**, Manhattan Beer’s Director of Fleet Operations. “I think today, everybody can do what we did. It is much easier, more cost-efficient, and [there’s] a lot of help from government. There are many products out there to help fleets to move from diesel to natural gas, electric or to other alternative fuels. I think everybody should jump on this.”

“The barriers to entry are lower than they’ve ever been, and there are lots of new programs and resources to help fleets in and around the South Bronx to make the transition away from diesel,” said Energy Vision’s President **Matt Tomich**. “RNG fuel is now readily available through the Clean Energy station in Hunts Point, there are many models of high-performance natural gas trucks, and there are financial incentives offered by NYC DOT, Clean Energy, and others. It’s a winning combination, and there has never been a better time to get started.”

#

NOTE TO EDITORS AND PRODUCERS: Sources quoted in this release and other experts are available for interviews on request. A recording of the full webinar audio with PowerPoint presentations is posted [here](#). For more information or to request interviews, please contact Stephen Kent, skent@kentcom.com, 914-589-5988.