



New Yorkers Rally For Clean Trash Trucks

City Council Legislation Lauded for Cleaning New York Air

New York, NY ([PRWEB](#)) April 6, 2005 -- INFORM, Inc., the national environmental research organization, hosted a press conference at City Hall to support the updating of clean air laws in New York City via legislation that will reduce transportation-related pollution and have a positive impact on the health of every community and citizen.

“The inclusion of a mandate that would greatly expand the use of natural gas-powered refuse and recycling trucks is especially groundbreaking,” said INFORM President Joanna Underwood. “By giving millions of New Yorkers healthier air to breathe, they are also doing more—reducing the noise garbage trucks make as they rumble through communities at night and decreasing the reliance of one of the city’s most essential public services on precarious supplies of foreign oil.”

Joining INFORM in backing the New York City Council initiatives are the New York League of Conservation Voters (NYLCV), West Harlem Environmental Action (WE ACT), the United Puerto Rican Organization of Sunset Park (UPROSE), and one of New York City’s leading real estate developers, Douglas Durst.

City Council Steps Up to the Plate

NYLCV Executive Director Marcia Bystryn said, “With this bill and the other clean air bills before the City Council calling for cleaner sight-seeing buses, school buses, and other City vehicles, New York City has the opportunity to take a significant step forward for cleaner air. These clean air bills are on the NYLCV City Council Scorecard, and they have the support of the majority of the Council. We look forward to their swift passage and more breathable air for all New Yorkers.”

Within a matter of days, the Council will hold hearings on this legislation, which updates the City’s transportation-related standards for the first time since Local Law 6 was adopted 14 years ago.

A Big Step Forward in Healthier Air for Millions of New Yorkers

Vehicles are responsible for the vast majority of air pollution in New York City. In 2003, the City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) reported that “they generate 71% of the region’s carbon monoxide, 53% of its smog, and 70% of the overall toxic chemicals in the air.” Refuse trucks and other heavy-duty diesel engines are responsible for significant emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOx), particulate matter, and toxic substances—all of which cause damage to the health of millions of New Yorkers. Furthermore, refuse trucks deposit their emissions at ground level on virtually every residential street in our city as they stop and start while picking up refuse or recyclables.

According to Peggy Shepard, executive director of WE ACT, “It is important that this bill be passed. Diesel fuel has such a negative effect on the public health that we need to invest in alternative fuels that will give us a stronger health benefit.”

Elizabeth Yeampierre, executive director of UPROSE, added, “We feel the enormous impact of refuse truck emissions on our community, where trucks queue up to eject their loads at the nearby transfer station, which is in close proximity to schools, homes, residences, and senior centers. The fumes from these idling trucks fill our



air; they stay on our streets and in our parks and school yards. Our children are suffering from asthma at alarming rates.Â

INFORMÂ's research has indicated that natural gas refuse trucks offer a critical opportunity to slash the health-threatening emissions from these trucks for three reasons:

- Natural gas is an intrinsically cleaner fuel. It contains far less carbon than any oil-derived fuel (only 20% carbon compared to petroleum's 36%).
- Natural gas trucks ensure more consistent reduction of lung-choking particulates than clean diesel technologies. Although "clean diesel" technology, which uses low sulfur fuel and aftermarket filters, has achieved the particulate reductions required by the US EPA by 2007, this capability has not been extensively road tested and is not guaranteed. As refuse trucks continuously stop and start during ordinary operation, they may not achieve the temperature needed for effective filter performance, and aftermarket treatment systems often deteriorate over time. Natural gas-powered engines have already demonstrated emission levels lower than the cleanest diesels and can achieve the EPA 2007 particulate standards without complex treatment systems.
- Natural gas vehicles that will be available in 2007 will have a competitive advantage over diesel in NOx emissions. New York City must address both particulate and NOx to maintain healthy air quality levels. The newest natural gas-powered refuse trucks today have NOx emissions that are 50% lower than those of conventional diesel trucks. Although diesel manufacturers have announced they will meet the reduced NOx standard of 1.2 g/bhp/hr in 2007, some natural gas engine manufacturers have already announced they will be one full gram lower (0.2 g/bhp/hr) surpassing the 2007 standard and achieving the standard for 2010, three years in advance of the requirements. The difference could mean one ton or more of fewer NOx emissions throughout the 7-year life of every natural gas truck.

The purchase of 120 new natural gas-powered, rather than clean diesel, refuse trucks in 2007 (30% of new truck purchases) could mean more than 100 tons of fewer particulates, an even greater reduction of NOx throughout the 7-year life of these vehicles, and the virtual elimination of toxic pollutants.

Less Noise: Improving the Quality of Life for New York Communities

Diesel garbage trucks are notoriously loud, generating noise levels of up to 100 decibels, which can cause serious hearing damage for sanitation workers. Natural gas-powered trucks are 50 to 90% quieter. These trucks will not disrupt the sleep of New Yorkers as they travel through neighborhoods in the early morning hours. According to a recent statement by New York's Mayor Bloomberg, reducing noise pollution must be a top New York City priority.

Natural Gas-Powered Trucks: A More Secure Fuel Source for One of NYC's Most Essential Public Services

The Department of Sanitation's 2,500-truck refuse and recycling fleet (the largest such fleet in the US) is 99% reliant on petroleum-derived fuel, which comes from increasingly risky foreign sources. Every truck powered by natural gas provides an immediate way to reduce this dependence.

The US relies on foreign supplies for 56% of its petroleum, and New York, with its overall reliance of 85%, is the more vulnerable to supply disruptions or price spikes than any other state in the country. As Underwood pointed out, "With the soaring oil consumption in China and India (home to more than one-third of the people on this planet) during the past five years, on top of the continuing political unrest in the Middle East, the risk that one of our city's most vital public services will see an interruption in its fuel supplies grows greater



by the day.Â

Refuse trucks are the most inefficient users of fuel of virtually any type of fleet (2.8 miles per gallon), and the purchase of 120 new natural gas-powered refuse trucks could displace almost 1 million gallons of diesel fuel per year.

Natural Gas Trash Trucks: Putting New York Back on a Leadership Track

INFORM has been at the forefront of research on refuse trucks, including its study *Greening Garbage Trucks: New Technologies for Cleaner Air*. Its research has revealed that, even though more than 90% of garbage trucks are powered by traditional diesel engines, a growing number of fleet operators in 47 cities across the US are adopting natural gas technology, leaving the era of more polluting diesel technology behind. Today, 1,348 natural gas-powered garbage trucks travel the nation's roads, with 500 more on order—more than double the number just 18 months ago. In other countries, Paris has just ordered its first 78 natural gas-powered trucks—part of a total order of 300 trucks by 2006. Madrid has ordered 379, and Greece plans to convert all of its refuse trucks to natural gas.

“While Los Angeles and San Diego are the US leaders, with a total of 463 natural gas garbage trucks today,” stated Underwood, “under the City Council proposal, New York would become the East Coast leader. It is important to remember that the New York Department of Sanitation pioneered the use of the first natural gas refuse trucks a decade ago, and with a City Council mandate giving companies in this new growing industry confidence in the market, New York can become a leading force once again.”

“Private sector leaders must work together with our City leaders if we are to shape an environmentally sustainable future for New York City,” added Douglas Durst of the Durst Organization. “If we want this city to be a place where people want to live and work, we must take advantage of the technologies for clean transportation as well as for green building, open space planning, and efficient energy use,” Durst said. “If we want New York to be a world-class city, we have to work together to achieve that goal.”

About INFORM

INFORM is a national, nonprofit research and outreach organization that examines the effects of business practices, technologies, and products on the environment and human health. For 30 years, INFORM has sought practical solutions to the environmental challenges of safeguarding ecosystems from toxic chemicals, shifting to pollution-free transportation, and preventing solid waste. Combining groundbreaking research with strategic outreach, INFORM endeavors to turn findings into change. INFORM's objective and constructive recommendations have helped guide members of government, industry, environmental groups, and communities around the world in decisions promoting both economic and ecological sustainability.

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