

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
AND WATERFRONTS

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CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION AND WATERFRONTS

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February 25, 2026
Start: 1:14 p.m.
Recess: 3:43 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 BROADWAY - 8TH FLOOR - HEARING
ROOM 3

B E F O R E: James F. Gennaro, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Harvey D. Epstein
Justin E. Sanchez

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
AND WATERFRONTS

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A P P E A R A N C E S

Keith Kerman, Deputy Commissioner for Fleet Management at the New York City Department of Citywide Administrative Services and Chief Fleet Officer for the City of New York

Sana Barakat, Deputy Commissioner at New York City Department of Citywide Administrative Services for Energy Management and the City's Chief Decarbonization Officer

Tarek Khalil, Assistant Commissioner of Mechanical and Plumbing Inspections at New York City Department of Buildings

Carleen McLaughlin, Director of Legislative Affairs at New York City Department of Environmental Protection

Rich Kassel, AJW Inc

Joy Gardner, Executive Director of Empire Clean Cities

Stephen Dodge, Director of State Regulatory Affairs for Clean Fuels Alliance America

Daniel Chu, Senior Energy Planner for New York City Environmental Justice Alliance

Kevin Garcia, Senior Transportation Planner for New York City Environmental Justice Alliance

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A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Alia Soomro, Deputy Director for New York City
Policy at the New York League of Conservation
Voters

Thomas Butcher, Technical Director at the
National Oilheat Research Alliance

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND
WATERFRONTS

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1
2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: This is a microphone
3 check for the Committee on Environmental Protection,
4 Resiliency and Waterfronts, located in Hearing Room
5 3, recorded on February 25, 2026, by Nazly Paytuvi.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL CAMPAGNA: Good
7 afternoon, and welcome to today's New York City
8 Council hearing for the Committee on Environmental
9 Protection and Waterfronts.

10 If you would like to testify, you must
11 fill out a witness slip with one of the Sergeant-at-
12 Arms.

13 Just a reminder, everyone please silence
14 all electronic devices, and no one may approach the
15 dais at any time.

16 Chair, we are ready to begin.

17 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Thank you. [GAVEL]
18 Good afternoon, I'm Council Member Jim Gennaro, Chair
19 of the Committee on Environmental Protection and
20 Waterfronts. Today, we'll be holding an oversight
21 hearing on the City's efforts to reduce greenhouse
22 gas emissions through the use of renewable diesel, or
23 RD. We will also be hearing two bills sponsored by
24 myself, Intro. Number 554, in relation to requiring
25 the Department of Citywide Administrative Services,

1
2 DCAS, to study the feasibility of using RD as a
3 heating oil, and Intro. 555, in relation to the use
4 of renewable diesel fuel, really as a transportation
5 fuel.

6 The vast majority of New York City's
7 greenhouse gas emissions come from buildings and
8 transportation, mostly buildings. While the City has
9 passed legislation requiring electrification of those
10 sectors, the transition away from fossil fuel
11 infrastructure will take time. In the meantime, the
12 City has explored interim strategies to reduce
13 greenhouse gas emissions, including the use of
14 renewable diesel. Renewable diesel is a biofuel
15 derived from plant or animal matter, which can be
16 used as a direct replacement for petroleum diesel, or
17 be blended with petroleum diesel or biodiesel.
18 Compared to ultra-low sulfur diesel, renewable diesel
19 can reduce nitrous oxide emissions by as much as 18
20 percent, reduce particulate matter emissions by as
21 much as 28 percent, and depending upon the feedstock
22 used for the RD, reduce lifecycle greenhouse gas
23 emissions by as much as 85 percent. Now we're
24 talking. Now we're talking is not written here, I
25 just added that in, you know. The legislation being

1
2 heard today aims to leverage renewable diesel's
3 potential as a replacement for petroleum diesel or
4 biodiesel in both heating and transportation
5 applications.

6 Now getting into the bills, Intro. 554
7 would require DCAS to study the feasibility of
8 renewable diesel to heat publicly and privately owned
9 buildings in New York City. The study would build on
10 prior research by DCAS -- and DCAS has been doing a
11 great job on all this stuff, they are killing it. It
12 would build on prior research by DCAS to provide an
13 updated assessment of potential benefits of and
14 barriers to using renewable diesel for heating,
15 evaluate whether such use would affect compliance
16 with the City's electrification and climate change
17 laws, and recommend new policies related to the use
18 of renewable diesel for heating.

19 Intro. 555 would codify the good work
20 that DCAS has already done to transition the City's
21 motor vehicle fleet to renewable diesel. The bill
22 would require that all City-owned or operated diesel
23 fuel powered motor vehicles be powered by renewable
24 diesel beginning in July of this year. The bill would
25 also require a DEP to report annually on the number

1
2 of such motor vehicles powered by renewable diesel
3 fuel. I look forward to hearing today from our City
4 agencies and members of the public about these bills
5 and about renewable diesel's potential to support the
6 City's ongoing greenhouse gas emissions reduction
7 efforts.

8 I would like to thank the Committee
9 Staff. Here we go. Legislative Counsels Natasha Bynum
10 and Sierra Townsend, who just came up to the dais a
11 moment ago; Senior Policy Analyst Ricky Chawla; and
12 Financial Analyst Tanveer Singh as well as -- thank
13 you -- Hal's, it's my brand, Hal's, from Brooklyn.
14 I'm from Queens. Okay. So, I mentioned Natasha right
15 here. I mentioned Sierra. Senior Policy Analyst Ricky
16 Chawla; Financial Analyst Tanveer Singh; as well as
17 my Legislative Director, Josh Gachette, for all their
18 hard work. I'd also like to give special thanks to
19 Legal Extern -- extern? Is that the word? Okay. Oh,
20 okay. Okay. Legal Extern, Bianca Miccolis, for her
21 great work on the Committee report for today's
22 hearing. She's a rising star.

23 I recognize the following Council Members
24 who have joined us. Council Members Sanchez and

1
2 Epstein, both new to the Body, both new to this
3 Committee, and I thank them for being with us.

4 I'll now turn it over to the Committee
5 Counsel to give the affirmation to the witnesses.

6 I'm going to read these witnesses right
7 now? Okay. Yeah. Okay. So, just so everybody so I
8 know who's up here. Keith Kerman, who is like the
9 Obi-Wan of, like, biofuels and done so much. He's the
10 Chief Fleet Officer for DCAS. Okay. Sara? Sara?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARAKAT: Sana.

12 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Oh, Sana. Okay.
13 Barakat. Okay. Okay. Thank you. Also from DCAS. Okay.
14 Tarek Khalil from the Department of Buildings. Okay.
15 Thanks very much. And Carleen McLaughlin, whose
16 impeccable handwriting makes it very easy for me.
17 Good to see you, Carleen. Okay. Now we got the oath
18 coming at you or the affirmation coming at you.

19 Can everyone please raise your right
20 hand? Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole
21 truth, and nothing but the truth before this
22 Committee and to respond honestly to Council Member
23 questions?

24 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: I do.

25 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER KHALIL: I do.

1

2

CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT: I

3

do.

4

LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR MCLAUGHLIN: I do.

5

COMMITTEE COUNSEL BYNUM: Great. Thank

6

you. You may begin.

7

CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: So, on the record in

8

front of the camera, it's just like, Hal's, great

9

seltzer, you know? So, I don't know if that's legal,

10

what I just did, but just - or Hal's seltzer, I like

11

it. Okay? So, tone it down a little bit.

12

All right. Do we have the testimony of

13

the witnesses? Okay. Oh, just going for... who's here

14

from CLA? You're here from CLA, right? What's your

15

name? No, it won't be on the record, but I'll hear

16

it.

17

JACOB HUNTER: Jacob Hunter.

18

CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Jacob Hunter. I'll

19

mention to you and to our Counsel that when we have a

20

hearing, I need large font testimony. I do not see

21

very well. But I can figure this out. And so thank

22

you, and I guess, Keith, you're going to... the

23

testimony starts with my name is Keith Kerman. I

24

figured... I think that's you so please continue with

25

1
2 your good testimony. Well, let me get out my pen so I
3 can make little notes.

4 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: Okay. Thank
5 you very much.

6 Good afternoon, Chair Gennaro and Members
7 of the Committee. My name is Keith Kerman. I'm the
8 Deputy Commissioner for Fleet Management at the New
9 York City Department of Citywide Administrative
10 Services, DCAS, and Chief Fleet Officer for the City
11 of New York. I'm here with Sana Barakat, Deputy
12 Commissioner at DCAS for Energy Management and the
13 City's Chief Decarbonization Officer, and also our
14 colleagues from DOB and the Department of
15 Environmental Protection, who you just introduced.

16 Thank you for this opportunity to
17 illustrate the City's ongoing fleet sustainability
18 efforts, including the utilization of renewable
19 diesel, as well as comment on the proposed
20 legislation to codify the use of this biofuel.
21 Additionally, I thank you for the continued
22 partnership between this Body and the City in
23 furtherance of promoting a cleaner municipal fleet
24 for really decades of work together.

1
2 In 2015, the New York City Mayor's Office
3 and DCAS rolled out the New York City Clean Fleet
4 Plan, whose goal was to reduce greenhouse gas
5 emissions from the City fleet by 50 percent within 10
6 years, which we refer to as 50 by 25. The New York
7 City Clean Fleet outlined three core strategies,
8 electrify the fleet as quickly as possible, implement
9 efficiencies aimed at further lowering carbon
10 emissions, including through the use of hybrid
11 vehicles, and reducing the overall size of the fleet,
12 and replace fossil diesel fuel with much cleaner
13 biofuels.

14 In the 10 years since the plan was
15 introduced, DCAS has maintained the focus, and the
16 fleet will achieve 50 by 25. Today, the City operates
17 the largest electric vehicle fleet in New York State,
18 with 5,735 EVs and another 410 units currently on
19 order. DCAS also operates the largest electric
20 vehicle charging network in the state, with 2,424
21 charging ports currently in operation, including 415
22 fast chargers and 161 solar carports. We are
23 installing more electric vehicle charging every
24 month. DCAS operates over 4,400 hybrid vehicles, and
25 through our Fleet Office of Real-Time Tracking,

1
2 called the FORT, we have successfully decreased the
3 size of the City fleet by 7 percent since Fiscal Year
4 2018. We have also implemented right-sizing measures,
5 including SUV reduction. The City unequivocally seeks
6 to achieve zero emissions for its fleet through
7 electrification, in accordance with Local Law 140.

8 Until we can feasibly electrify all
9 aspects of City fleet operations, for example,
10 snowplow trucks, DCAS has been implementing various
11 biofuels, including biodiesel and renewable diesel.
12 These two fuel types are not fossil fuels. Instead,
13 they are produced from feedstocks, including waste
14 animal fats, used cooking oil, soybean oil, and corn
15 oil. These fuels achieve substantial greenhouse gas
16 reductions through the fuel production process.
17 Biofuels can achieve reduced emissions of harmful
18 chemicals like sulfur, carbon monoxide, nitrogen
19 oxide, and particulate matter, depending on blend and
20 feedstock when compared to the combustion of fossil
21 fuels, and a study could present an opportunity to
22 better understand criteria pollutant emissions with
23 biofuel and heating oil.

24 For many years, DCAS used blends of 5 to
25 20 percent biodiesel in fleet vehicles. DCAS sought

1 to take the City's biofuel program further by
2 substituting renewable diesel for the remaining
3 fossil fuel to go to 100 percent. Renewable diesel is
4 made from the same waste and renewable feedstocks as
5 biodiesel, but is manufactured to the same ASTM
6 standard, American Society for Testing and Materials,
7 as diesel fuel, and can be used in all trucks, off-
8 road equipment, and underground storage tanks. Today,
9 DCAS uses renewable diesel in every make, model, and
10 year of its fleet equipment, emergency and non-
11 emergency, on and off-road. Most notably, renewable
12 diesel is clear in color and has no foul, nauseating
13 smell, whereas fossil fuels consist of hydrocarbons,
14 also known as aromatics, such as benzene. In addition
15 to their strong, unpleasant odor, these chemicals are
16 carcinogenic. Through our use of renewable diesel,
17 DCAS has reduced exposure to these dangerous
18 chemicals, thus improving workplace health and safety
19 for thousands of City drivers and mechanics and our
20 fellow New Yorkers as a whole.

21
22 I wanted to bring a demonstration of
23 canisters, one with renewable diesel, one with
24 regular diesel, and you could see and smell, and then
25 it occurred to me it probably wasn't a good idea to

bring fuel into this building, so I didn't do that.

But come to DCAS and we can do that for you.

CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: We appreciate that.

CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: Yes. I didn't want to get arrested before the hearing.

CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Yeah, and you have a keen grasp of the obvious, so I appreciate that.

CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: In 2018, DCAS implemented a one-million-gallon demonstration project for renewable diesel and worked with the Fire Department and the New York City Department of Environmental Conservation to obtain authorization to utilize the fuel. Once approved, DCAS became the first major consumer outside the western coast of the United States to adopt this fuel. Subsequently, DCAS put out a contract for a regular supply of renewable diesel, and in November 2023, we announced that this biofuel would replace nearly all fossil diesel fuel used by the City fleet. The following year, DCAS completed this initiative. Today, over 95 percent of diesel fuel for the fleet consists of biofuels, namely a blend of 95 percent renewable diesel and 5 percent biodiesel, and all City-owned fuel storage sites house only biofuel.

1
2 Additionally, DCAS has also worked to
3 implement renewable diesel in the City's marine
4 vessels. In October 2024, DCAS, the Department of
5 Transportation, and the Economic Development
6 Corporation announced plans to transition these
7 vessels, including the Staten Island Ferry, to
8 renewable diesel. And both DCAS and DOT collaborated
9 to test over one million gallons in the ferries
10 before jointly announcing last June that the system
11 had fully transitioned to renewable diesel. The
12 Staten Island Ferry fully uses renewable diesel and
13 has now for eight months. Presently, over 4.5 million
14 gallons of renewable diesel have been used for the
15 seven passenger ferries that the DOT employs. In
16 addition, DEP, the New York City Police Department,
17 the Fire Department, and New York City Parks are all
18 currently testing renewable diesel in their own
19 vessels at this time.

20 With respect to Intro. 555, DCAS is
21 generally supportive of this legislation as the City
22 has successfully utilized over 43 million gallons of
23 renewable diesel for government operations, including
24 to power us through this very harsh winter we've
25 endured over the last month. For context, we have

1
2 already implemented the equivalent of two complete
3 years of fleet and ferry fuel use with renewable
4 diesel. This is the largest renewable diesel program
5 east of the Rocky Mountains in the United States.

6 Once again, I thank you for holding this
7 hearing about renewable diesel and its role in
8 reducing carbon emissions in service of ending our
9 dependence on fossil fuels. My colleague, Sana
10 Barakat, will now provide remarks. Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Thank you, Keith.

12 Please.

13 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:

14 Good afternoon, Chair Gennaro and Members of the
15 Committee. My name is Sana Barakat, and I am the City
16 Chief Decarbonization Officer and DCAS' Deputy
17 Commissioner of Energy Management. Thank you for
18 inviting us to this hearing today.

19 As we have shared previously, Local Law
20 97 guides the City's framework for greenhouse gas
21 emission reduction, requiring City government
22 operations to reduce emissions faster than the
23 private sector. The DCAS Division of Energy
24 Management is charged with leading the citywide
25 mobilization, and our efforts have focused on

1
2 buildings, which represent roughly 70 percent of
3 total emissions from our portfolio. I am happy to
4 share that our work is continuing to deliver results.

5 Between Fiscal Year '6 and Fiscal Year
6 '24, the City has reduced emissions by 31 percent for
7 government operations.

8 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: When you say... pardon
9 me, just jumping in, when you say reduce emissions,
10 you mean greenhouse gas emissions?

11 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:
12 Correct.

13 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Okay.

14 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:
15 Yes. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: 31 percent?

17 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT: 31
18 percent as of Fiscal Year 2024.

19 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: We're going to come
20 back to that number, and not in a good way. I'm
21 sorry.

22 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:
23 We've also reduced building energy consumption by 16
24 percent over a similar period. This progress is a
25 testament to the City's leadership by example, and

1
2 the hard work carried out by DCAS and our colleagues
3 across the city. We are also thankful to the Council
4 for the support we've received over the years that
5 continues to prioritize climate action as a pillar of
6 this City's government. We are currently well
7 positioned to reach our 50 percent reduction target
8 ahead of the schedule set in local law 97.

9 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Hang on. I just lost
10 my place.

11 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:
12 Third paragraph.

13 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Yeah. We're
14 currently well positioned to reach our 50 percent
15 reduction carbon...

16 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:
17 Target.

18 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Target ahead of
19 schedule. Okay.

20 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:
21 Set in Local Law 97...

22 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: We'll talk about
23 that.

24 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:
25 Which mandates a 50 percent emission reduction by

1
2 2030. This leaves us looking towards the future and
3 longer term decarbonization.

4 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Hang on. I'm
5 confused. Oh, a 50 percent emission reduction,
6 meaning GHG emissions, by 2030. Oh, that's my phone.
7 Let me silence it. That was a hospital. I'm having
8 some surgery on Monday. It's not really a big deal,
9 but they want to talk to me, you know. They're lucky
10 if I show up, you know. I will call them back. Okay.
11 So, 50 percent by 2030. Yeah. We're going to talk
12 about the mandate by 2025, which we didn't get to.
13 But please continue.

14 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:
15 Okay. This leaves us looking towards the future and
16 long-term decarbonization. We believe renewable
17 diesel holds an important place in that long-term
18 strategy. Our projections indicate that full scale
19 replacement of heating oil with renewable diesel
20 would allow us to achieve up to a 6 percent
21 additional reduction from our Fiscal Year '6 baseline
22 emissions. This makes renewable diesel a valuable
23 interim step that we can pursue in the short term as
24 we further reduce energy consumption and more broadly
25 electrify City buildings in the long run.

1
2 Currently, New York State law requires
3 that biodiesel is 10 percent of all heating oil. DCAS
4 has implemented that requirement for City buildings.
5 By 2030, New York State law requires 20 percent of
6 all heating oil to be biodiesel. In Fiscal Year '25,
7 New York City government building used 21 million
8 gallons of heating oil. As was achieved in fleet,
9 renewable diesel could offer the opportunity to
10 replace fossil fuel use completely for City
11 government building operations until zero emission
12 options are implemented.

13 In partnership with my colleague, Deputy
14 Commissioner Kerman, DCAS is conducting several pilot
15 studies to confirm the compatibility of renewable
16 diesel with current heating systems as a drop-in
17 replacement for other fuel blend used as a building
18 heating oil. Our preliminary results are positive so
19 far, but we are still at the early stage and are
20 continuing to expand this pilot to more locations.

21 Intro. 554 requires DCAS and stakeholder
22 agencies to conduct a similar study and provide a
23 report recommending whether to further expand on
24 renewable diesel use in City buildings. As you can
25 tell from my testimony, we support the goals of this

1
2 bill to promote expanded use of renewable diesel in
3 buildings across the city as an interim step in
4 decarbonization while we advance toward long-term
5 electrification. We have several smaller areas of
6 feedback with the bill we'd like to discuss with you
7 further, such as the timeline and scoping. However,
8 we broadly support this thoughtful legislation and
9 appreciate your efforts to create healthy spaces and
10 further advance decarbonization in the city.

11 Deputy Commissioner Kerman and I are now
12 happy to address any questions you may have. Thank
13 you.

14 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Thank you. Thank you
15 very much for your good testimony. Can I call you
16 Sana? Is that okay?

17 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:
18 Yeah.

19 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: I'll just call you
20 Sana. You can call me Jim.

21 So, here's what I'm going to do for my
22 Colleagues. My Colleagues are very busy. They have
23 other meetings they have to attend, perhaps. So, what
24 I ordinarily do, you are both new to the Committee.
25 Normally I'll just have a couple of questions from

1 the statement and, before I get to the questions that
2 are prepared for me, which could go on a while. So,
3 I'm just going to do this, and then I'm going to let
4 you guys jump in with questions, and then I'll get to
5 the main part of my questioning so people can get
6 their questions on the record before they may have to
7 be someplace. So, let me do that now.

8
9 Okay. I made some notes here. Okay. Let
10 me go to the very end. Sana talked about broad
11 support for Intro. 554, but you indicated that DCAS
12 has several small areas of feedback, I'm quoting,
13 with the bill that we'd like to discuss with you
14 further, and you indicated timeline and scoping. This
15 is the kind of thing that, you know, this is the
16 public hearing, and, you know, we've got the
17 Committee Members here and the Council and people in
18 the audience and people who are watching and
19 streaming. You know, to the extent that we can get
20 those types of things, like, on the record, that's
21 really better so when you're talking about timeline,
22 okay, a couple of sentences on that would work, and
23 scoping, okay. I mean, as much as we can put on the
24 record, because what we're doing is, like, setting
25 up, like, a, you know, behind closed doors sort of

1
2 meeting about that. I would prefer just going
3 further. This is for anybody that testifies for the
4 Committee. If they have, you know, modifications that
5 they have to the bills that are a subject of the
6 hearing today, I prefer, you know, to the extent
7 possible, to put that on the record. Now, as long as
8 you're here, you know, do you have any insight into
9 what kind of modifications you may like to make to
10 timeline and scoping? If you can get into that a
11 little bit, that way at least we get that on the
12 record and not just that's, like, a topic that we're
13 going to pursue sort of offline. I mean, you know,
14 whatever you can do.

15 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:
16 Yeah. Just a couple of things on the timeline. One
17 year is not enough to be able to complete a study
18 with the requirements within the bill. More time
19 would be better for us.

20 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Yeah. We can talk
21 about that.

22 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT: We
23 can talk about that.

24 And the scoping, just broadly, we think
25 that it's prudent to focus the study on municipal

1
2 buildings and not extend it to the private side
3 because my portfolio is basically City government
4 operations, and we can learn from the study and
5 inform the public side on what needs to be done.

6 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Yeah. But certainly,
7 that kind of thing would be available if you really
8 wanted to get it, right, on the private sector side.

9 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:
10 The information we gain, you know, could be useful.

11 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: I mean, the City
12 certainly knows. When you say you're the City's Chief
13 Decarbonization Officer, does that mean City
14 government or city?

15 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:
16 City government.

17 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Oh, so City
18 government.

19 Now, so there's the Chief Decarbonization
20 Officer, which I think used to reside in MOCEJ, I
21 think. You had Rit, who was the City's Chief Climate
22 Officer.

23 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:
24 Climate Officer, yeah.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: And so now you're,
3 so when it comes to decarbonization, there's no one
4 else at MOCEJ with that title or, like, you're it?

5 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT: I
6 don't believe so. But I'm focused on the government
7 operations.

8 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Right.

9 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:
10 MOCEJ focuses on citywide. That's the difference.

11 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Okay. So, someone at
12 MOCEJ could, you know, endeavor to get the citywide
13 information that we are looking for in this bill. It
14 would just require DCAS to talk to MOCEJ. And so, you
15 know, this is kind of like a silo mentality, which
16 when I worked for the Koch Administration, when
17 dinosaurs roamed the earth, you know, this is
18 something that happens in City government. Like, you
19 know, our agency does this, and this is what we want
20 to do. So, I think we're inclined to, you know,
21 include the information that we've asked for, and if
22 that means collaboration with MOCEJ, then so be it.

23 And then we'd be more inclined to give
24 you more time to do that, because it's more like
25 huffing and puffing to get it all done, because you

1
2 have to interact with somebody in the other silo. So,
3 you know, you really have to respond to that, but
4 that's just my two cents on that.

5 And so, yeah, so getting things on the
6 record is very important. And we just did that, and
7 that was fun.

8 And this is one for Keith. Now we've had,
9 you know, biodiesel, we go back on that when I first
10 did the first biodiesel bill, however many years ago
11 that was. I don't even know.

12 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: 2013.

13 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: 2013, okay. And so
14 that was, you know, that was a very big deal. And one
15 of the, you know, one of the issues back then was
16 getting the biodiesel in a sustainable way. We had
17 the, at that time, maybe they still call it this,
18 there was the, what is it? It was the Biodiesel
19 Sustainability Board or whatever. It was like a
20 national organization or whatever that was really
21 pushing for the use of biodiesel, but there was a
22 question back then about, you know, the way to
23 produce the bio part, you know, in a sustainable way.
24 Back then, there were arguments about people were
25 clear-cutting rainforests in order to grow soybeans.

1
2 You know, we're like way past that. But that was an
3 issue. And I talked to those guys, and I said, look,
4 you know, if you really want, you know, biodiesel to
5 be the big thing you want it to be, you know, you
6 need like a sustainability, like, standard. Almost
7 like LEED standards for buildings or whatever that
8 they had to have some or they have that for lumber,
9 and it's like you really need like a sustainable
10 thing. And so now we're going to, so now we're going
11 to RD. But it's really using the same kinds of
12 feedstocks, right? It's just a difference in how it's
13 refined or whatever, and so I guess two-part
14 question. I think it's important every time we go
15 further into biofuel world because now we're talking
16 huge, you know, amount. You're the, you know, is
17 there anyone that uses more, is any entity that uses
18 more biodiesel, more, you know, RD than New York
19 City? I think you have the biggest contract for it of
20 anybody, right?

21 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: On the east
22 coast, no, actually, east of the Rocky Mountains, no.

23 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Right.

24 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: The State of
25 California, through the low carbon fuel standard,

1
2 States of Oregon and Washington, but especially
3 California, is an enormous adopter of renewable
4 diesel.

5 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Right.

6 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: Seventy
7 percent of all fuel sold in the state of California
8 on the transportation side, vessels and vehicles, is
9 renewable diesel today. And that's not government,
10 that's everything.

11 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Everybody.

12 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: So,
13 California does lead the way. But then in terms of
14 east of the Rocky Mountains and certainly the east
15 coast of the United States, DCAS has really
16 introduced this fuel to this side of the country.

17 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Okay. So, I think
18 it's important to put on the record, you know, as we
19 go further into biofuels, which I'm all for, that the
20 bio feedstock is indeed, you know, produced
21 sustainably, and we don't have to worry about the
22 things we used to worry about years ago, and so there
23 is sufficient feedstock, and it is indeed, you know,
24 sustainable so we don't have issues in that regard.
25 Is that your...

2 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: Well...

3 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: I don't want to put
4 words in your mouth.

5 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: Sure. So,
6 first, I think you're referring to the National
7 Biodiesel Board, which is now the Clean Fuels
8 Alliance...

9 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Okay.

10 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: And they are
11 here.

12 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Oh, National. Okay,
13 yeah, that sounds familiar.

14 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: And they now
15 have rebranded as the Clean Fuels Alliance, and they
16 are in this room with us today. And there is a
17 quality standard called BQ9000, which is used to make
18 sure that the product we're receiving as biofuels is
19 a high-quality produced, properly manufactured
20 product, and that is still part of our contracts
21 today.

22 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Right. But in terms
23 of the sustainable or the... I'm talking about the
24 sustainable origin of the feedstock. That's really
25 what I'm looking at.

1
2 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: Yeah,
3 absolutely. So, one other addition... so, two aspects
4 to that. One, we have the Bureau of Quality
5 Assurance, which are the quality assurance and
6 technical inspectors for the City so they do all the
7 inspections for fuel to make sure it meets all of our
8 specifications. One of those specifications is
9 ensuring that it is, in fact, 100 percent biofuel.
10 And so right off the bat, we are testing every week
11 to make sure that when we are buying 100 percent
12 biofuel that that is what we're getting at a
13 technical level, that that's what's going into the
14 vehicles.

15 Then on the feedstocks...

16 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Right.

17 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: Most of our
18 feedstock right now, about 90 percent of it, is used
19 cooking oil and waste animal fat, and so each
20 supplier is providing a manifest confirming that that
21 is the feedstock that we are receiving. And then we
22 have also been in touch, this whole project for going
23 back possibly 10 years, with the California Air
24 Resources Board as the largest consumer of these
25 fuels in the country and through the low-carbon fuel

1
2 standard, which is the carbon market, to help us make
3 sure that we are all getting distinct supply of
4 feedstocks. So, we have shared information with the
5 California Air Resources Board and have had a regular
6 communication with them to make sure that there is no
7 issue of double counting.

8 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Right.

9 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: And they are
10 the real market. So, they're still the largest
11 market. As we go further into this process, I think
12 one of the things we want to look at and whether
13 that's done through New York State or another agency
14 in New York City, is further protections on
15 monitoring feedstocks. So, California is way ahead of
16 us in terms of the monitoring of feedstocks. I think
17 we have been in touch with them. I think there's more
18 that can be done as we go further, as we expand this
19 market. The reality is DCAS introduced this market to
20 New York just within the last three years so I do
21 think there's more that can be done, but our
22 contracts have pretty clear terms. We are getting
23 very specific manifests about the feedstocks. We get
24 tracking of the feedstocks every week from our two
25 suppliers, and so I think we have a lot of certainty

1
2 that we are getting what we're supposed to. But
3 frankly, as this market grows, as this commodity
4 grows, then it goes beyond DCAS, and I think there is
5 more that can be done.

6 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Yeah. Just a note to
7 Counsel. I think we may want to do something in the
8 bill that gets to like the progeny of the feedstock.
9 Did I use that word right? Is that right? Yeah, so
10 the progeny of the feedstock because we want to be
11 able to tout this as, you know, renewable and we know
12 exactly what we're getting and we have a mechanism
13 for checking it and all that. Like Keith himself
14 said, maybe there's a little more to do in that area,
15 and, you know, we want to affirm to the people of the
16 City of New York that we're getting the best stuff.
17 We're getting the 30-year-old bourbon or whatever. I
18 don't drink, so I can joke about it.

19 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: Since you had
20 mentioned getting on the record any comments about
21 the bill, I did want to mention one about 555. In the
22 current reading of the bill, it restricts the use of
23 biodiesel to 5 percent, and we would ask that that be
24 up to 20 percent. RD80B20 is a very viable
25 transportation blend. In some ways, it's a preferred

1
2 transportation blend. When we first bid our contract,
3 we actually bid for RD80B20.

4 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Right.

5 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: It was more
6 logistics. It was actually more about tank holding
7 capacity. And honestly, there was one agency that
8 wanted to use just 5 percent biodiesel. The other
9 agencies were fine with 20 percent, but our vendors
10 said they can't do both so you got to pick so we
11 picked RD95B5.

12 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Right.

13 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: But we would
14 like to have the option to do 20 percent. It can be
15 less expensive because biodiesel is still a little
16 less expensive, and it actually can be better as an
17 operating duplicity fuel. So that's one.

18 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: No, this is good.

19 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: And since you
20 asked, I want to...

21 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: It's the kind of
22 thing I like. People should see what we're doing. You
23 can't have every negotiation now on the record, but
24 we're here at a hearing and, to the extent that we
25 bring daylight into this process and get everything

1 on, to get whatever we can on the record so thank you
2 for bringing that up. Counsel has made a note of
3 that, and we really appreciate that, and so thank
4 you.
5

6 Okay. We kind of covered that. All right.
7 We covered that. Yeah, this is more feedstock stuff.

8 Okay. Here's where I put on my bad guy
9 hat a little bit, Sana. So, in 2008, I authored the
10 New York City Climate Protection Act that required 30
11 percent reduction in GHGs in the New York City
12 government sector by 2017 and a 30 percent reduction
13 in the city overall by 2030. And those were not
14 goals. Those are mandates. Even though the Speaker's
15 Office, they're just like, just make it a goal
16 because the administration, Bloomberg at the time,
17 didn't want to make it a mandate. And their complaint
18 was that if they make it a mandate, then the City
19 would actually have to do it, and I'm like, well,
20 that's the point. You know, when I set a goal, I want
21 to do a mandate. So, it was 30 percent reduction in
22 the City government sector by 2017, 30 percent
23 reduction in the city overall by 2030. 2017 came and
24 went. I was not in the Council at the time. I left at
25 the end of 2013 and came back in February 2021. And

1
2 so when Local Law 97, which you make reference to in
3 your testimony, was enacted in 2019, whatever it was,
4 right, 2019, the negotiations for Local Law 97 were
5 that, you know, DCAS, i.e. the City, was out of
6 compliance with the mandate from the New York City
7 Climate Reduction Act of 2008, whatever the bill
8 number, you know, like whatever the local law number
9 was. I don't even know. I just know that was when it
10 was done. So, the 2017 deadline for 30 percent in
11 City government operations came and went. It was now
12 2019. I don't think the City was very close to the 30
13 percent mandate. So even in 2019, two years after the
14 thing was over. So, whether it was the Council or
15 whether it was the Administration or both, took the
16 opportunity to put in language that would supersede
17 the language that was in my law from 2008, which was
18 30 percent reduction in city by 2017. So Local Law 97
19 said, okay, forget about 30 percent by 2017. We'll do
20 40 percent by, you know, 40 percent City government,
21 you know, GHG reduction of, you know, GHGs based on
22 2005 or 2006 timeline, like whatever it was. But yet
23 you come today and say that, you know, based on, oh,
24 it's in your testimony, the baseline. The baseline,
25 like I said, I don't see very well. But it was, you

1 know, you mentioned in your testimony somewhere, like
2 what the baseline is, 2005, 2006.
3

4 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:

5 2006 is the baseline.

6 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: What's that?

7 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:

8 2006 is the baseline.

9 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Okay. 2006. So based
10 on, which is obviously what was in my original law.
11 So, you know, here we are. What is it? Nine years,
12 you know, like, well, oh, wait a minute. Not nine
13 years past 2017 because you're now at 30, which would
14 have been great if it was 2017, but it's not. It's
15 nine years later so now we're a year past the Local
16 Law 97 mandate of 40 percent reduction in New York
17 City government generated GHGs, and so it was 40
18 percent due by last year. We're only at 31 now. And
19 so the last DCAS Commissioner, Molina, you know, he
20 came to meet me in my office. Oh, and he was at a
21 hearing once too. I put this on the record. I said,
22 look, I just want you to come up with, you know, with
23 a memo. Just tell me what you can do, you know. Tell
24 me what you can do. Like, you're out of compliance. I
25 can get an environmental group to sue you tomorrow,

1
2 you know. But, you know, we don't have to get all,
3 you know, all in each other's face. He's a very sweet
4 guy. So, he produced a memo that had some, you know,
5 that had some, I forget what it was, but he said,
6 okay, like, we'll get to the, you know, we'll get to
7 the 2020, because back then it wasn't 20... it was
8 just, it was 2024 or whatever it was. And so, like, I
9 knew we couldn't get it done by the next year, 2025,
10 you know, get to 40, like that. But it's just like, I
11 need to know when you're going to be in compliance.
12 And what we always get, just like, you know, the law
13 that I passed that had a mandate of the 30 percent
14 reduction by 2017, that didn't happen, and so in 2019
15 it was 40 percent by 2025. That didn't happen. And
16 now we have testimony that says, you know, like the
17 next deadline is like 2050. I'm like, we're going to
18 beat it, you know, but we're out of compliance right
19 now, and so I'm going to need to know, you know,
20 because that is tantamount to the City being out of
21 compliance with Local Law 97. Now every Council
22 Member goes back to the District and they hear co-ops
23 and everything, and everyone's yelling and screaming
24 about how all of a sudden, you know, the climate
25 problem is my co-op's fault. And we either have to do

1
2 all kinds of stuff that we can't afford or we have to
3 pay fines on top of that, you know? And, you know,
4 that's like a real heavy lift, but the City is able
5 to write itself a pass so they didn't meet their, you
6 know, so my constituents had a 2025 Local Law 97
7 deadline, at least like the 10 or 11 percent of the
8 buildings that had to do something significant by
9 '25. Most don't. Most, it's like 2030 is like the big
10 date. So, difficult for me to sort of go back to my
11 District and explain to people, explain to co-op
12 owners how they have to do X, Y, and Z, and
13 particularly those that had to do something very
14 expensive by 2025, and the City that had in, you
15 know, in black letter law that they have to get to 40
16 percent GHG reduction by 2025, which was no surprise
17 to them, the law having been written in 2019, you
18 know, they had six years to do it and we are not
19 close. So, I don't know. I mean, I need, and this
20 goes to the CLA too. I mean, I need something in
21 writing like you just can't, just like my
22 constituents are going to get, you know, are going to
23 get kicked in the pants if they don't do what they
24 have to do by Local Law 97, you know, how does the
25 City get away with just like not doing it and just

1
2 say, don't worry. Like when it comes to, you know,
3 like when it comes to the next deadline of 50
4 percent, what is that?

5 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:
6 The next deadline for 40 percent?

7 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Yeah. Whatever. You
8 mentioned some other things, sort of like the next
9 thing and that you were going to surpass it. It's in
10 here somewhere.

11 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:
12 Oh, the 50 percent we will surpass...

13 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: CHAIRPERSON GENNARO:
14 50 percent by when?

15 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT: By
16 2030.

17 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: So, 50 percent by
18 2030.

19 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT: We
20 will surpass 50 percent by 2030.

21 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: By 2030.

22 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:
23 Which is the mandate.

24 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: And like that, I
25 love, but you're out of compliance now.

2 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:

3 Right.

4 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: And so we need like
5 a timeline to get to that 25 percent, to get to that
6 40 percent, which is already a year late. I cannot go
7 back and sell Local Law 97 in my District when I'm
8 not doing everything I can to get... so the City can
9 write itself, you know, my dog ate my homework, you
10 know, but my co-ops can't do that, and so I got to be
11 able to go back there and say, look, I was up there.
12 I was like tough with them. I put on my sheriff's
13 hat, you know, and I was like pounding the table and
14 stuff like that. Let the record show I've got my
15 sheriff's hat on and I'm pounding the table. Okay. So
16 now I can tell my constituents that. And people are
17 going to be able to see that, you know, Gennaro
18 acting like a fool like 50 years from now, you know?
19 And so it is a nice hat though. My wife gave it to
20 me. Everyone who thinks it's a nice hat. Very good.
21 Okay. So...

22 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:

23 I'd like to respond.

24 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: So, that being said,
25 like, where are we? And like, what should I

1
2 reasonably ask? I mean, well, I think I'm asking for,
3 you know, DCAS' best assessment of when it is going
4 to come into compliance with the 2025 40 percent GHG
5 reduction mandate, which was not a suggestion and
6 how, and all the, you know, all the environmental
7 organizations who like yell and scream about the, you
8 know, about how, you know, Mayor Adams and Rit wanted
9 to be a little easier on compliance. If you're out of
10 compliance with 2025, they were technically supposed
11 to get a fine, but it gave them the latitude to say,
12 come up with a plan. You know, we don't want your
13 money. We want your carbon. So, if you have like a
14 good faith plan, we'll take that instead of a fine.
15 There were protests in front of City Hall every day,
16 like how dare the Adams' Administration let people
17 off. Why they're letting you off. I don't know why. I
18 mean, you guys should get sued. You're out of
19 compliance with the law. You know, I think the
20 environmental groups are sleeping. You know, it's
21 just like they like pretend to care about Local Law
22 97 when it comes to my co-op owners. When it comes to
23 the City of New York, they're like, they couldn't
24 care less. So that was, you know, anyone who
25 represents the environmental community, you know, you

1
2 should come here and explain like why you're not
3 suing the City, except you're out there like yelling
4 and screaming to my co-ops or whatever. I really am a
5 nice guy. So, anyway, so that is of concern to me,
6 and I think other Members, because particularly like
7 the newer Members who are going around, you know, and
8 getting hell from their co-ops about, you know, Local
9 Law 97 compliance, which they're doing. If our
10 constituents have to do it, then you got to do it
11 too, and so we want something on paper, like when are
12 we going to get to 40? We're at 31 now. When is 40
13 happening? That's the least. That is a lot easier
14 than dealing with a lawsuit from some, you know,
15 environmental group. You can, you can respond to that
16 or just...

17 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:
18 I'll respond.

19 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Okay. Please.

20 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:
21 Yeah. A couple of things.

22 The memo you were mentioning, in that
23 memo, we do show how we're going to get to the 40
24 percent.

25

CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Yeah, but that's
Molina.

CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:
That's me. That's me. That's my team.

CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Okay. Fine. Oh, he
asked you to write it.

CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:
That's right.

CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Okay.

CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:
Like my, you know, our Energy Management Team do the
planning and the implementation of decarbonization
for City government.

CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Right.

CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:
So...

CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: What did that say?

CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:
The memo says we showed basically that we will be
able to meet based on our projects in the pipeline
and we should be coming online in the spring. The
combination of both, we will be able to meet our 40
percent by Fiscal Year 2027.

CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: So next year, you're going to go from 31 to 40 in one year.

CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:
So, 31 percent, just to clarify, is per Fiscal Year 2024, and we've been doing about 4 to 5 percent a year.

CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: But you're positing that this is the number right now. I mean, yes, it was from...

CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:
It's per fiscal, because we published, the data is published. There's a lag, about a year and a half lag with the data. So, the 31 percent is per Fiscal Year 2024. It's not 2025.

CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Okay. So...

CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:
And we've been doing about 4 to 5 percent reduction a year. So...

CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: How much reduction a year?

CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT: 4 to 5 percent between Fiscal Year '24 and '23, with about 4 percent GHG reduction.

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CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Okay. So even though your testimony says 21, like you say, it's more, right?

CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:
31. We said 31 percent.

CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: So, 31 now, but there's a lag. So, you know, you would say that is actually more than that.

CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT: A lag in...

CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: We'd have to calculate it or whatever.

CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:
Yeah. A lag in publishing, I mean, a lag in publishing.

CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Okay.

CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:
So, with the last data we published was in Fiscal Year '24, and that showed to be 31 percent reduction. So, we still have a year away from Fiscal Year '25. Also, we have a bunch of projects in our pipeline. We're investing about 1.4 billion in the next couple of years to implement more projects, and we will get there.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Why don't we update
3 that memo? Okay. Why don't we update that memo?
4 Because, you know, life has changed a little bit or
5 whatever it is.

6 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT: We
7 can do that.

8 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: So we have that
9 memo. So if you update that, you know, get it to the
10 Council, to the Committee. And, you know, by the way,
11 I'm not an actual sheriff. I just play one when I'm
12 really just the Chairman or whatever.

13 But, I mean, you know, we get slammed
14 when we go out there, and they're like, you know,
15 every time government wants to do... anytime
16 government... anytime people are called upon to fulfill
17 a government objective, they, like, subsidize it. So,
18 you know, government wanted me to buy an electric car
19 and I bought one, and I got, like, a ton of money
20 from, like, the state and a ton of money from the
21 feds. You know, they want me to put solar panels on.
22 Okay. You know, big subsidy for that or whatever. But
23 when it comes to Local Law 97, nothing. It's just
24 like this is a government objective, and guess what?
25 You all have to pay for it. And so your co-op caused

1
2 it. And so that's just the way the law was written.
3 Okay, whatever. I don't think it's particularly fair.
4 I mean, I hear the Mayor talking about some sort of
5 subsidy or whatever the heck, I don't know. But, I
6 mean, it is very, very difficult, you know, for us to
7 kind of, you know, go out there and talk about Local
8 Law 97 compliance and have... I was the first one to
9 have, like, you know, 97 in your District, and I had,
10 you know, I had the New York City Accelerator and
11 everybody. And I preached the gospel that anyone who
12 is, you know, trying to comply with Local Law 97 who
13 is not dealing with the New York City Accelerator is
14 doing it wrong so I'm trying to get it done, but it's
15 just like I really demand that the City do its part
16 with its... you've got a lot more resources than my
17 constituents have. And so, you know, pardon me in a
18 way for... because I really respect this panel, but,
19 you know, we're the ones that have to go out there
20 and, like, sell this policy. And the co-op owners
21 aren't stupid. Like, the board presidents, you know,
22 like, they're knowledgeable, you know. Stupid's a bad
23 word. But, I mean, like, they know what's going on,
24 and so they know the City is not complying with Local
25 Law 97 and they throw that in my face. What am I

1
2 supposed to say? And so I said, all right, you know,
3 I'll put on a hat, I'll bang the table, which I did,
4 and so... but we want that memo, you know. And I
5 appreciate it. I appreciate all the work you've done.
6 You know, you're trying to do what you can with the
7 resources that you have. But, you know, our
8 constituents have to follow different things.

9 So, meanwhile, I went way, way, way, way
10 on, and so now I'm coming back with, like, the real
11 questions. And so, it is my pleasure to recognize
12 Council Member Epstein for his debut EPW Committee,
13 and he's even tougher than I am. Do you want the hat?

14 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: I'm all right.
15 Yeah, thank you. Thank you, Chair, and thank you all
16 for being here.

17 Is there an investment in renewable
18 diesel that conflicts at all with your investment in
19 moving the fleet to electric?

20 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: No. We are
21 pursuing both sides.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: Is there a
23 capital investment for the biodiesel?

24 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: No. There's
25 no capital side to the fuel program whatsoever. It's

1
2 all an expense investment. So, we are making sure
3 that every vehicle that can be electric when it's
4 purchased is electric, right? So, all purchases for
5 the City of New York come through my office, and
6 nothing is getting purchased if there is an electric
7 option unless it's electric. That isn't the issue.
8 The issue is...

9 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: Can you say what
10 percentage of the fleet is that?

11 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: Right now,
12 about 20 percent of the fleet is electric.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: 20 percent.

14 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: Correct.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: And what
16 percentage is using biodiesel?

17 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: Well, we have
18 about 11,000 assets that are using renewable diesel.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: 11,000. What
20 percentage is that?

21 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: So, it's 11
22 over 28, so probably about 40 percent.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: So, 20 percent
24 electric, 40 percent biodiesel.

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CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: That's

3

correct.

4

COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: And the

5

transitions to electric, what does that look like

6

every year, year over year?

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CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: Well, it

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depends on what we are buying in any given year, and

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it depends, of course, on fiscal resources that we

10

have. So, what we can say is that every vehicle that

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can be electric, when an agency comes to replace a

12

vehicle, if it has an electric option, that's what

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we're buying, and that's what we continue to do.

14

COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: Only electric,

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not hybrid, not hybrid plug-in, just full electric?

16

CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: We are

17

mostly.. so go back to the early electric program. We

18

were probably about 50/50 plug-in hybrids and then

19

all electric, battery electric. We are now 80/20, 80

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percent battery electric, all electric, and about 20

21

percent plug-in hybrid. And I far prefer battery

22

electric. Battery electric is where you get the

23

environmental benefit. Battery electric is where you

24

get the maintenance benefit. However, we have issues,

25

and I've given examples since we're in endless storm

1
2 operations. The storm supervisors for the Department
3 of Sanitation are in a plug-in hybrid SUV.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: Right.

5 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: Why? Because
6 you can be in periods like we are in right now and
7 when you're 24 hours a day going for weeks and we
8 don't want charging to become an impediment to the
9 storm response.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: So, 20 percent
11 all electric, 40 percent biodiesel. How much is the
12 hybrid or hybrid plug-in combo?

13 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: The 20
14 percent is all electric or plug-in hybrid together.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: So what's just
16 all electric then?

17 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: I can get you
18 that. I don't want to guess it off the bat. We also
19 have an additional 4,400 hybrid vehicles, which are
20 hybrid electric, right? So they don't have a plug,
21 but they are hybrid.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: Just straight
23 hybrid, right?

24 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: Correct. So,
25 we could certainly get you that math. I mean, right

1
2 now I can tell you we have a little bit more than
3 10,000 hybrid, plug-in hybrid, and all electric fleet
4 vehicles in the fleet. So, if you looked at hybrid,
5 plug-in hybrid, electric, it's 10,300. And then it's
6 a little more than 11,000 that are using renewable
7 diesel. And those are the trucks, the plow equipment,
8 the fire trucks.

9 But the big challenge for us is that so
10 many of these units do not have an electric option
11 today so it's not, well, you're doing renewable
12 diesel and you could do electric. There's not an
13 electric plow truck anywhere out there viable today,
14 and so, you know, until there is, and it's going to
15 take years.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: When you say that
17 years, what do you think the technological advances,
18 what's that timeline look like?

19 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: It would take
20 plow trucks. Obviously, there's a lot of components
21 to the City fleet. We can get into fire services,
22 ESU, but just take plow trucks. There's not a
23 functional operating plow truck right now. There are
24 a few tests overseas of plow trucks, like, you know,
25 snow mountain areas.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: Are we talking
3 five, ten years?

4 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: I think
5 you're talking, unless technology changes, 10 years,
6 at least on the truck itself.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: Right.

8 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: Then you have
9 to go into the extraordinary investment to do fast
10 charging. We would have to fast charge at every one
11 of the Sanitation garages on a 12-hour shift. You'd
12 have to bring them all in at 250 kilowatts. That's an
13 incredible amount of power.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: Right.

15 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: You would
16 also then have to solve the backup power issue. We
17 had localized power losses across the city, not
18 major, but localized during this major storm. What
19 happens if you have a major? You can easily have the
20 power go out in a much more generic way.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: That's why the
22 NYPD hasn't transitioned to electric.

23 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: It's one of
24 the challenges for the NYPD. Again, the vehicles are
25 starting to come on from police. We are just

1
2 introducing the Chevy Blazer EV, which is the first
3 pursuit-rated electric vehicle. We have already out
4 on the streets about 150 Mach-Es in patrol for NYPD.
5 But those are technically not pursuit-rated. We can
6 get into what that is, but it's technically not
7 pursuit-rated. The Chevy Blazer is just being
8 introduced as a pursuit-rated. I think the vehicles
9 will be there sooner for the Police Department. We
10 still will have to deal with the charging issues. We
11 are rolling out charging every day, but there is
12 still a need. Then there are the backup power issues.
13 So, I think it's very much why do we want to use
14 renewable diesel? Because we recognize, and again,
15 plow trucks, 3,000 plow trucks, a huge percentage of
16 our diesel fuel, that we aren't going to have a
17 viable electric for a reasonable amount of time. We
18 are endlessly talking to manufacturers about it. We
19 are constantly talking to the Macs of the world, Mac
20 Trucks, which is our main supplier of Sanitation
21 vehicles, and to others about this. We are constantly
22 pushing them to develop on this. They know very much
23 that that's where we want to go, but we could
24 reasonably be using renewable diesel for 10 or more
25 years.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: When you're
3 looking at it, are you making a choice between
4 renewable diesel versus electric? Is that ever a
5 calculation on the cost associated with these
6 purchases?

7 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: We buy
8 electric where it's viable. The main issue, honestly,
9 the issue that comes and flummoxes us the most is
10 plowing. I'll take the Parks Department. We have
11 electrified almost every pickup truck at the Parks
12 Department that does not plow. But now we're getting
13 into the issue of Parks has a plow capacity, and we
14 don't have a viable plow truck. So that's where, you
15 know, and I fight it as hard as I can, but that's
16 where we often say, all right, you can get the diesel
17 pickup truck for now, and we'll use renewable diesel
18 until we can solve the plowing issue. I do think
19 we'll solve plowing on pickup trucks sooner. There is
20 something called an E-Rev. There's a new version of
21 technology where it's an all-electric pickup truck,
22 but it has a backup diesel generator, and so we think
23 the E-Rev concept that is being used overseas and is
24 starting to develop in the United States is going to
25 help us solve, at least for pickups, the plowing

1
2 issues for pickups. The big trucks, really, really
3 challenging.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: And so you're
5 saying the cost is not a determination when deciding
6 whether the technology is there. If the technology is
7 there, you are purchasing electric...

8 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: That's
9 correct.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: In the entire
11 City fleet. And the City fleet, you say, does or does
12 not include NYPD fleet?

13 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: It does.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: So, any vehicle
15 that's an electric option is available versus a
16 hybrid option, you're choosing electric only?

17 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: Yes. And
18 that's required by Local Law 140, effective July 1st
19 of 2025.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: And what is, you
21 think, the timeline to transition the City fleet?
22 Over what period of time will we get to a place where
23 we all have electric for those vehicles that are
24 electric only?

1
2 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: Well, Local
3 Law 140 requires the light and medium duty to be
4 electrified by 2035. I think that...

5 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: Buses, too, by
6 2035, too, right?

7 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: That is
8 correct. Separate law. And, of course, the school
9 buses are mostly, almost exclusively, contracted. So
10 that's, you know, we support the school bus program,
11 but those are contracted. So that's a little bit more
12 about New York City Public Schools contracting
13 program.

14 I think we have, at the technology side,
15 we are going to have the technologies for the light
16 and medium by 2035. Plowing for pickups being one of
17 the big ones we have to solve. And then further
18 advance on the Police Department side, but we already
19 have some police models. So, I think the 2035 for
20 light and medium is a target that we can really
21 aggressively go at.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: And do you see
23 any emissions downsides for the renewable diesels?
24 Are you worried about any other kind of exposure for
25

1
2 using renewable diesels to the population versus
3 traditional diesel?

4 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: Look,
5 renewable diesel has been incredibly positive, in my
6 view, operationally. The whole City fleet is running
7 on renewable diesel as we speak. We just went through
8 our third winter, two major storms, a cold weather
9 crisis. Renewable diesel powered the City fleet in
10 the last few weeks.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: So, are you
12 currently using anything but renewable diesel in the
13 City fleet?

14 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: There's a
15 very small number of fire ambulances and police ESU
16 that use commercial retail, and that's for logistics
17 reasons. So, there are some ambulances that are not
18 operating nearby to a Fire Department fuel depot so
19 you're not going to have them drive long distances to
20 get to the Fire Department's in-house fuel so they
21 use retail. It's less than 5 percent of the fuel, and
22 that's solely the only reason. Other than that
23 logistic issue for a small percentage of the fire and
24 police fleet, everything else is renewable diesel. We
25 do not hold any fossil fuels. The City has 400 fuel

1 sites. So, we're the third largest gas station
2 operator, fuel site operator in the state of New
3 York. We don't hold any fossil diesel anymore. We
4 only deliver renewable diesel to our in-house fuel
5 sites. If, you know, an ambulance needs to use retail
6 because it's too crazy to drive. Yeah, I can't drive
7 an hour to the FDNY site, then we allow that. But
8 other than that, the whole program is renewable
9 diesel. You know, even, you know, as I testified,
10 even the smell aspect of it. You know, the zero
11 smell, the zero benzene.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: Besides renewable
14 diesel and electric, are there any other types of
15 vehicles you're purchasing? Are you using any
16 hydrogen technology or using anything else? You're
17 just using renewable diesel and electric or the
18 hybrid?

19 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: Yes. Right
20 now, the whole sustainability program is renewable
21 diesel with that 5 percent biodiesel or the
22 variations, hybrid electric, plug-in hybrid electric,
23 battery electric. Soon this E-Rev, this additional
24 type of electric with this backup generator. We used
25 to have natural gas. We do not employ natural gas any

1
2 longer. And it's a longer discussion. You know, we
3 monitor hydrogen. And, you know, hydrogen is a very
4 fascinating potential. You know, zero emissions,
5 water vapor emissions at the vehicle, scalable. Some
6 of the issues of scalability that impact electric and
7 plowing would not impact hydrogen. Hydrogen could be
8 vehicle class 1 through 8 off-road, across the board,
9 very scalable. As a fleet manager, you would love
10 hydrogen. The issues on hydrogen are all the
11 infrastructure.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: The storage and
13 all.

14 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: The storage.
15 And, of course, currently you can't move it legally.
16 I mean, there are, you know, so there's a Fire
17 Department component. There's the infrastructure
18 components, which are substantial. There is movement
19 in hydrogen in Europe, in California. We monitor it.
20 You know, it's not impossible 30, 40 years from now
21 that hydrogen really does become the full scope
22 transport answer. We're just not there yet.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: Thank you. Sorry
24 to take up so much time. Appreciate that, Chair.

CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: No, no. It's fine. I purposely didn't set a time for Members to ask questions. Figured this is like the honeymoon hearing, you know, so I figured just let people go for it plus it's just us so it's all good.

Thank you very much, Council Member.

I recognize Council Member Sanchez for questions.

COUNCIL MEMBER JUSTIN SANCHEZ: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, everyone, for all of the time that you've already been on here.

So, what you'll learn about me very quickly is I hate a feasibility study. I am on the bill because I'm really excited to see this coming, but one of the things that I hate is a feasibility study to do things that we should just already start doing. And so, can you explain to me, is there other opportunities in addition to a feasibility study to just actually start getting to work? Is that including a pilot study that, you know, we can start helping you see actual City buildings going through this process? How can we start actually getting to work on doing these big transitions instead of, you

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2 know, giving you more studies and more work to do
3 rather than letting you get to work?

4 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Council Member, I'd
5 like to try and answer that, if that's okay.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER JUSTIN SANCHEZ: Yeah.

7 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: And so I'm a witness
8 now. And so, yeah, you know, when it comes to using,
9 because we've got the statewide, you know, we've got
10 the statewide bioheat mandate. And the only fuel that
11 you can use to fulfill the statewide mandate is
12 biodiesel. It doesn't allow for RD. I mean, we're
13 ready to go with that. I mean, I want to do a bill
14 that said let's just, you know, let's have rather
15 than, because we're at what, B10 now?

16 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: That's
17 correct. We're at B10, fully implemented through
18 state law.

19 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: We're at B10. And I
20 said, okay, rather than using B10 for biodiesel,
21 let's just use B10 for RD. It's a, you know, better
22 fuel, like the, you know, refining process, whatever.
23 There's just good things about it. But in order for
24 us to do that, we would violate state law, and so we
25 wanted to kind of like, you know, get the ball

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2 rolling. And so the best we could do, and I'm with
3 you on like studies. When it comes to studies, it's
4 just like, yeah, I don't generally like to do that,
5 but, you know, let's get information going. Let's
6 build like a groundswell for the State to have a
7 little more flexibility to allow RD to fulfill the
8 statewide bioheat mandate. I mean, like what the
9 State does is not my business. I mean, for the rest
10 of the state. But, I mean, you know, for New York
11 City, it'd be great if we could just say, you know,
12 we know RD. We bought a ton of it. We love it. You
13 know, we could have private purveyors have that to
14 fulfill our B10 mandate, which we did in local law.
15 But now the State is in the picture, and the State is
16 controlling, you know, what you can use to fulfill
17 like the bioheat mandate and it's only biodiesel so
18 we can't tell the State what to do, and so that's
19 where we are. And I'm just as frustrated as you. I
20 might put the hat on and bang the table, just so it's
21 stated, but I won't.

22 So, do you have anything to add to that?

23 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:

24 May I add something? Okay. So, we agree that, you
25 know, doing something ahead of the study. So, we

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2 started actually doing pilot testing at one of the
3 schools. The results were very positive. In fact, the
4 operators are happy because the working conditions
5 are better, cleaner air. And it's showing that it
6 could be a drop-in replacement of fuel, of regular
7 heating oil. So, it's going well. And we're about to
8 launch another pilot study at another school before
9 the end of the heating season.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER JUSTIN SANCHEZ: That's
11 what I was going to ask. Is there an opportunity to
12 expand this pilot study?

13 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:
14 Yes.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER JUSTIN SANCHEZ: Are you
16 aware of any existing bills that, you know, would
17 formalize a kind of pilot study in a localized area?
18 Would that be something that the Administration would
19 be interested in looking at?

20 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: You have the
21 first bill out there on this topic.

22 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:
23 Right.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: And part of the
3 study is to do testing. That's, like, built into the
4 bill.

5 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: Absolutely.
6 So, as we've testified, you know, there are a few
7 minor issues we've already talked about that we want
8 to explore. One thing I'll say a little bit about
9 bioheat. So, first, of course, we are using bioheat,
10 biodiesel, 10 percent of all fuel. It's going to be
11 20 percent of all fuel effective 2030, and that's
12 statewide. But we always try and lead. So, we were
13 the first to do B-5. We were the first to finish B-
14 10. We'll be the first to finish B-20. One thing
15 about renewable diesel, you know, there's no one more
16 excited about the potential of doing this until we
17 can get to zero emissions than I am. However, whereas
18 California led on transportation and renewable
19 diesel, right, extensively, right, enormous program.
20 And then we did the technical work to bring it to New
21 York, which itself was years. We worked with the Fire
22 Department, State DEC, DEP. For a long time, the Fire
23 Department doesn't, you know, quickly let you switch
24 the fuel out, right? We did a lot of work, and the
25 Fire Department was an extraordinary partner in this.

1
2 There isn't as much implementation, I think some of
3 the later testifiers will talk about. Renewable
4 diesel and heating oil is pretty new. And and we are
5 set up through this bill and your work to be really
6 the national, if not international, leaders in this.
7 But I do think there's some due diligence that has to
8 be done, and that's what we've started together in
9 doing the testing. So, I do think, you know, everyone
10 in this panel, we do want to test it. We do want to
11 work through with the industry that it's compatible
12 with burners. Or if there's anything you need to do,
13 what do we need to do? So, there is some work. We've
14 already begun that. This bill is going to help us
15 codify it all. You know, I'd love to say do it
16 tomorrow. I'd be the first person to do it tomorrow.
17 But I do think there's some due diligence we have to
18 do, and we really will be the leaders in heating oil.
19 California, in fairness, you know, DCAS was the
20 leader in bringing it to the East Coast. California
21 was the leader in implementing it in transportation.
22 We really, New York, will be the leaders in renewable
23 diesel and heating oil.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER JUSTIN SANCHEZ: And have
25 you had boots on the ground in California seeing, you

1
2 know, meeting with your counterparts there,
3 understanding, you know, what are best practices?
4 And, you know, as you're bringing that over, you
5 know, to New York, have you ever been able to like,
6 you know, there's one thing about reading a study and
7 like seeing it and being able to like physically be
8 present and understanding, you know, those things.

9 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: For renewable
10 diesel, it began in San Francisco. We went out, I
11 went out to San Francisco to meet with the City of
12 San Francisco with the Clean Cities Alliance. And I
13 know New York Clean Cities is here today. That was
14 actually how we began. We went out and we were
15 talking to San Francisco and their fire department
16 was using it. And we said, hey, you know. And we have
17 had a regular communication with the California Air
18 Resources Board, as I mentioned earlier, about this
19 program. So absolutely, yes. Interestingly enough,
20 though, I did not believe there was a lot of
21 renewable diesel and heating oil used in California.
22 Heating oil is kind of more our problem. And so I
23 think it's going to be the opportunity for us to
24 really lead in this aspect of using renewable diesel.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER JUSTIN SANCHEZ: Are there
3 other places around the world, other cities
4 internationally that we should be looking at as we're
5 gathering research, as we're looking at, you know,
6 potential partners that are using heating oil?

7 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT: I
8 was going to say, I'm not aware, but, you know, the
9 study would inform us of such information. We can
10 always look at, you know, what's been done elsewhere
11 and learn from it.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER JUSTIN SANCHEZ: Awesome.
13 Thank you so much.

14 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Thank you, Council
15 Member Sanchez. I appreciate you being here, being on
16 the Committee. And, you know, we've got a good little
17 Committee.

18 Okay, I'm just going to go through, like,
19 a little lightning round. Do you have a time
20 commitment? Are you okay? Oh, okay. All right, fine.
21 Okay.

22 Yeah. I'm not going to give every
23 question, but we want to get this on the record. How
24 might the City's adoption of renewable diesel to heat
25 City-owned buildings affect the City's ongoing

1
2 electrification efforts? Everyone's interested in
3 electrification, and so we want to get this on the
4 record.

5 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:

6 Yeah. Thank you for that question. So, we're viewing
7 renewable diesel as an interim step, you know, while
8 we are doing electrification. So, electrification is
9 going to be the long-term decarbonization, right?
10 However, through our analysis, the renewable diesel,
11 if it's used as a drop-in replacement for heating
12 oil, it's going to give us up to 6 percent GHG
13 emission reduction.

14 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Right.

15 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT: So
16 that's pretty good. So, we'll continue doing
17 electrification. In fact, we have a study ongoing on
18 electrification with NREL to develop a roadmap, how
19 we can do electrification throughout the assets,
20 throughout our portfolio, government-wise and
21 citywide. So, while we are using this as an interim
22 step, we'll continue working on electrification as a
23 long-term.

24 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Great. Thank you.

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2 This is for DEP. Okay. Has DEP approved
3 any renewable fuels other than biodiesel for use in
4 heating systems pursuant to Section 168.1b-5 of the
5 City's Administrative Code? If so, which fuels and
6 which criteria did DEP consider when issuing such
7 approvals? Ominous question there.

8 LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR MCLAUGHLIN: Yes.

9 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Please state your
10 name for the record.

11 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:
12 Sorry. Carleen McLaughlin for DEP.

13 We have received and approved three
14 applications for renewable diesel in heating systems,
15 two for blended use and one for 100 percent renewable
16 diesel. The criteria considered were whether the
17 renewable diesel met Fuel Oil Grade 2 and 40 CFR Part
18 79 standards, including the testing and reporting
19 requirements.

20 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: So, these boilers
21 are burning like 100 percent RD, right?

22 LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR MCLAUGHLIN: One of
23 the applications was for 100 percent.

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2 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: One of them. Doesn't
3 that violate state law or whatever? How does that
4 work?

5 LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR MCLAUGHLIN: I'll
6 have to get back to you about that and see the
7 details of the application.

8 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: I mean, you know,
9 I'm not the bioheat sheriff, although I guess I am,
10 you know, but... okay. Thank you. Thank you.

11 LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR MCLAUGHLIN: Sure.

12 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Does DEP have plans
13 to approve any other heating oils pursuant to the
14 same section of the New York City Administrative
15 Code?

16 LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR MCLAUGHLIN: We'll
17 review all applications as they're submitted to us.

18 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Okay. Same section.
19 Section 168.1 - oh, no, different. Yeah. It's 168 but
20 a different part of 168. 168.1H of the Administrative
21 Code gives DEP the authority to enforce the City's
22 clean heating oil mandate. Has DEP engaged in such
23 enforcement efforts? And then it's like if yes, I
24 have a question. If no, I have a question.

2 LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR MCLAUGHLIN: Yes. We
3 are engaged in those enforcement efforts. We inspect
4 and we take and test samples.

5 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Pardon?

6 LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR MCLAUGHLIN: We take
7 and test samples.

8 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Okay.

9 LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR MCLAUGHLIN: Yes, we
10 are involved.

11 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: All right. For the
12 Department of Buildings? Okay. You're up. You're up.
13 Is DOB aware of any compatibility issues regarding
14 using renewable diesel in traditional boilers or
15 heating systems? Compatibility issues.

16 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER KHALIL: So, my
17 name is Tarek Khalil.

18 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Again, please state
19 your name for the record.

20 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER KHALIL: Yeah.
21 Tarek Khalil is my name.

22 In terms of compatibility issues, it's
23 still an emerging area. We're still exploring it. It
24 hasn't actually been cited in the Mechanical Code
25 yet, renewable diesel. It's not one of the options in

1
2 terms of fuel, oil. We're actually, I think, in order
3 to actually understand whether or not this, whether
4 R100 is actually a feasible fuel would actually have
5 to be some kind of a study of some sort. Right?
6 Because it's actually not part of the code at all.
7 Now let's say, for example, if there were to be some
8 kind of a study of some sort, right, there would have
9 to be an understanding of what the impact is on the
10 materials. Certain materials, certain strainers,
11 filtration of the fuel oil itself, and also making
12 sure that we have proper combustion chemistry as
13 well. So, it would be necessary to actually make sure
14 that if there was, let's say, for example, an
15 existing burner, fuel oil burner, that it be tuned in
16 accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
17 That's important. If someone purchased a new burner,
18 for example, they would actually need to make sure
19 that that burner once again is also is ready for R100
20 as well, renewable diesel.

21 Now, in terms of what do you call it, the
22 work itself, it would have to be performed by an oil
23 burning equipment installer. That would be the right
24 individual to actually do it.

25 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Right.

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2 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER KHALIL: So those
3 are the details. But in terms of compatibility, like
4 in short, we don't really know what the issues are
5 because it's not in use.

6 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Right.

7 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER KHALIL: My teams
8 haven't actually encountered use of R100. We have
9 seen B100 biofuel and regular diesel, but we haven't
10 explored the area yet.

11 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Okay. Fair enough.
12 Has DOB, let's see if this question is relevant.
13 Okay. Back to DCAS.

14 What have been the greenhouse gas
15 reductions achieved through the City's use of
16 biodiesel and RD to date? I think that was in your
17 testimony, but let me just ask it again for the
18 record. What have been the greenhouse gas reductions
19 achieved through the City's use of biodiesel and RD
20 to date?

21 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: Okay. So, the
22 main RD program, of course, is in fleet. So as of the
23 publication through 2024, and Sana had mentioned that
24 the City's publication is actually through Fiscal
25 Year '24.

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CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Right.

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CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: We had achieved a 46 percent reduction in greenhouse gases, as was published in December in that report, for the City fleet, including the vessel program and technically the aviation program, which is a fairly small program. So, for all of City transportation, which is the City fleet, all the City vehicles, off-road equipment, for the vessels, for all the boats, the Staten Island Ferry, and other vessels, and aviation, we had been 46 percent reduction.

So now Fiscal Year '25 is already done, right? The report isn't out, but the fiscal year is done. So, we used more than 4 million additional gallons of renewable diesel. We also reduced in Fiscal Year '25 through electrification 400,000 gallons of gasoline. So, we are very confident we will be over 50 percent for the City fleet. You know, we can wait till it's published, but my guess is we'll be somewhere around 55 percent reduction based on the known inputs, right? It's not our agency that publishes the report, so out of respect, we wait to see the report. We provide the information. But we know we're at 46 percent today based on the published

1
2 report, and that we know we have already greatly
3 increased renewable diesel in Fiscal Year '25, and we
4 reduced gasoline use through electrification so we've
5 got both movements. We're going to be above 50.

6 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: And when it comes to
7 aviation, when talking helicopters, what are we
8 talking about?

9 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: Yeah. The
10 City has a small helicopter program, mostly at the
11 New York City Police Department. We are in very early
12 conversations. As you know, there is something called
13 sustainable aviation fuel, which is essentially
14 renewable diesel for aviation, the aviation specs.
15 And so we have introduced a conversation with the
16 Police Department. We want to make sure that we do a
17 lot of due diligence. Obviously, those are
18 helicopters in the air. But that is a conversation
19 that we are starting to have.

20 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: I know that DEP has
21 this huge boat, this huge boat that does.. whether it
22 brings the sludge out or it.. like whatever it does. I
23 see it in the river from time to time. It's a pretty
24 big boat. I mean is that using any kind of..

1
2 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: Yes. And so I
3 might give credit to our Executive Director of Fleet
4 Operations, Harris Kaplan, who is here in this room.
5 But he's been working with all the vessel programs,
6 including the DEP sludge boat, which has used.. I
7 could be off in the number, but over 40,000 gallons
8 of renewable diesel to date. And we would like to
9 transition the entire DEP vessel program to renewable
10 diesel this year. And we are in that testing phase.

11 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Great. Thank you.

12 Okay. Another one for DCAS. How does the
13 City calculate the lifecycle greenhouse gas emission
14 of the fuel that it procures? How does the City
15 calculate the lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions of
16 the fuel that it procures?

17 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: Okay. So as I
18 mentioned earlier, RD is still a fairly new
19 commodity, and so our contracts are tied to the
20 California Air Resources Board Pathways Initiative.
21 And that is how we monitor, going to your question,
22 and that is how we track carbon intensity. So, if you
23 just Google California Air Resources Board Pathways,
24 you will see all the approved and published pathways.
25 And what did I mean by pathway? A pathway is a

1
2 feedstock, whether it's corn oil or used cooking oil.
3 It also goes into the transportation components, how
4 it is transported to its end destination. So those
5 pathways are the source of how we monitor greenhouse
6 gases. And, again, California is clearly the leader
7 in renewable diesel implementation and scale, and so
8 we feel comfortable using the California Air
9 Resources Board Pathways as our kind of basic source
10 of verification at this point.

11 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Great. Thank you. Is
12 the City considering any changes to its protocol for
13 calculating lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions?

14 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: Mayor's
15 Office of Climate and Economic Justice or the
16 Department of Environmental Protection might be
17 better able than DCAS to comment on that.

18 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT: I
19 believe it's MOCEJ who will look into it, yeah.

20 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Pardon?

21 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT: I
22 would say MOCEJ would look at how they would do that
23 calculation.

24 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Okay. We'll save
25 that for them.

1
2 What's that? Oh, right, right, right,
3 right. Okay, yeah. I'm blathering on here, and the
4 Counsel of the Committee was a great advocate for the
5 Council Member. I recognize Council Member Epstein
6 for more good questions.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: Thank you, Chair.
8 I'm sorry to interrupt.

9 Just a couple more questions I could just
10 on the... I didn't get a chance to talk about
11 buildings, so if I could take a couple minutes to do
12 that.

13 I'm wondering besides renewable diesel,
14 like, what other options are you looking at? Like,
15 are you moving buildings into electrification? What's
16 that process look like? Because I know you're saying
17 you're studying this right now for building heating.
18 I'm wondering what are you studying?

19 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT: So
20 we look at different things. So, in terms of
21 projects, we're doing a lot of projects, lighting
22 projects, lighting upgrades. We do comprehensive
23 retrofits. We look at solar, you know, fuel
24 conversion.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: So, what
3 percentage of our City property has solar panels on
4 it?

5 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT: So
6 far, we have installed 33.2 megawatt of solar, and we
7 have about 40 megawatt in our pipeline.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: So what
9 percentage of our fleet has any bit of solar on it?

10 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:
11 Oh, the fleet.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: No, the City
13 property, the City property. What percentage of our
14 buildings then have solar on it?

15 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT: I
16 don't have that number, but I can get back to you.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: Yeah. And so is
18 it like a vast majority of our buildings are now
19 operating with solar or no?

20 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:
21 Majority? Not the majority. I don't have that number.
22 I don't want to say the number.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: Are you moving
24 towards electrification of some of those buildings
25 too?

1

2

CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:

3

Yes, of course. So we have, under Leading the Charge,

4

we have to initiate by law... by commitment, actually.

5

We committed to initiate about 100 schools to be

6

electrified. We have 40 in design and construction

7

right now. We're going to have one fully electrified

8

school by the spring. We're doing partial

9

electrification for the most part now because doing

10

electrification takes a long time. So, whenever we

11

have opportunities to actually convert fossil fuel

12

equipment to electrify, that's what we do. We have

13

100 sites right now that are doing partial

14

electrification. And we are doing this NREL study

15

that I mentioned before to develop that roadmap on

16

how we can implement because it is costly. Obviously,

17

it's going to take time.

18

COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: Right.

19

CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:

20

It's going to require a lot of capital upgrades and

21

investments.

22

COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: And so you're

23

doing 40 with existing capital that you have to do

24

those 40 buildings to conversion that you're in

25

design with right now?

1
2 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:

3 I'm sorry. What is the question?

4 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: You said you were
5 designing 40 schools to move to electrification.

6 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:

7 Correct.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: And so what is
9 your timeline then to move to electrification for our
10 City-owned property? What is your estimated timeline?

11 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:

12 So, it's taking between three and five years really
13 to finish one electrification project.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: Sure. I know
15 we're talking about biodiesels. So, is there a
16 timeline you think within the next five years, 15
17 years we'll be moving our... like where are we going to
18 get to a place where our City-owned property is
19 electrified? Is that in the next five years, 20
20 years?

21 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:

22 Yeah. It's not going to be in the next five years.

23 It's going to be more than that. And like I said, in
24 order to do it all, we're doing the study to help us
25 figure out where the investment should be, what is

2 going to be most impactful, what should we be
3 targeting first, prioritize.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: The renewable
5 diesel that you're looking into, is that a cost
6 differentiation for renewable diesel and other forms
7 of diesel? Is there a cost difference?

8 CHIEF DECARBONIZATION OFFICER BARAKAT:
9 There is a cost difference. I don't have those
10 numbers.

11 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: Yes.
12 Currently, it's 46 cents.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: Compared to
14 regular diesel?

15 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: Yeah, more
16 than that. Interesting enough, if you go to
17 California, which has a low carbon fuel standard, or
18 Oregon or Washington State, there's no difference. In
19 fact, renewable diesel is less expensive in some
20 cases. But that is a product of the low carbon fuel
21 standard policy.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: But in New York,
23 you're saying 46?

24 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: In New York,
25 where we don't have a low carbon fuel standard, at

1 least at this moment, and we unabashedly were the
2 introducers of this fuel. Much of our challenge was
3 how do we bring a fuel that is being used extensively
4 in California and the West Coast through the low
5 carbon fuel standard, how do we introduce it and let
6 people know that it's out there and exists? So, yeah,
7 we do have an increment that we pay. Interesting
8 enough, we offset it within the fleet program through
9 the reduction in gasoline use through electric and
10 hybrids. So, if you look in the Mayor's Management
11 Report, you will see that total fuel costs for the
12 City fleet did not go up as we implemented renewable
13 diesel. Because, yes, we're paying an increment on
14 one side, but we're also reducing the amount of
15 gasoline by millions of gallons on the other side, so
16 it's offsetting. So, you could say the City fleet
17 paid for the renewable diesel program with its
18 efficiencies through electrification.

19
20 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: And the same
21 thing will apply for buildings then? Are you saying
22 it's going to be more costly for renewable diesel and
23 when we convert these buildings and you're seeing
24 savings through electrification as well?

1
2 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: The model I
3 described... now, there is a clean heat standard, and
4 the Chair probably knows a lot more about that than I
5 do so there is the potential for a clean heat
6 standard, which could incentivize and create that
7 lower price parity. But the model that fleet employed
8 should be available as efficiencies. In fleet, we
9 have hybrid vehicles, electric vehicles. We achieve
10 efficiencies. We use less fuel, and that's helped
11 offset the price of renewable diesel, which is more
12 expensive. As Sana talked about, I think that same
13 model should be available on the building side.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Thank you, Harvey.

16 Okay. Another one for DCAS. DCAS is all
17 over it. Okay. The bill, meaning 555, requires use of
18 RD that meets the specification of ASTM designation
19 D975, grade number 1DS15. Yeah. Does the renewable
20 diesel fuel currently used by DCAS meet that
21 standard?

22 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: Actually,
23 that was another of the items that we were going to
24 discuss. So, we no longer use a 1D fuel. 1D is a
25 winterized diesel fuel. We stopped using that in

1
2 2013. We went to a winterized ultra-low sulfur diesel
3 2, and now we use an Arctic blend renewable diesel.
4 And it's the Arctic blend renewable diesel that's
5 powering every Sanitation, Fire truck, Parks truck
6 today. So, we will have for you a slightly altered
7 recommendation on the ASTM that we'll provide.

8 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Okay. We look
9 forward to that.

10 The bill also requires, 555, the use of
11 renewable diesel that has a carbon intensity that is
12 at least 60 percent lower than that of ultra-low
13 sulfur diesel. What is the carbon intensity of the
14 renewable diesel that DCAS currently uses in its
15 fleet, and how does DCAS verify that carbon
16 intensity? Did you get all that? You want me to
17 reread it?

18 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: I've got it.

19 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Okay.

20 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: So, our
21 contract requires 60 percent or greater, so very
22 similar language to the law, and then, you know, the
23 weighted CIs, I'm going to look at it. So as you
24 know, used cooking oil has the best CI. It's the
25 least carbon intense. You know, the number is 19.71.

1
2 Tallow, you know, waste animal fat is the next up, is
3 36.13. Actually, used corn oil is 28.97. So, you
4 know, all of them have these scores, and then there's
5 soybean oil, which is higher, less carbon benefit. So
6 we, again, all of this relies on the published
7 pathways for the California Air Resources Board. And
8 every feedstock that we, every gallon, or it's really
9 barge deliveries, barge deliveries is how we receive
10 our renewable diesel currently, they have to provide
11 the verified feedstocks tied to the California Air
12 Resources Board pathways, and there's specific
13 certificates tied to each of the published pathways.
14 And that's how we know where we're getting the fuel,
15 and that's how we know the scoring. And again, I
16 guess in order, used cooking oil is the best, corn
17 oil is second best, tallow is third best, and soybean
18 oil is at the bottom of that pack. Those are the
19 four. There are other feedstocks out there. Canada
20 uses canola, but the four feedstocks that I described
21 are the ones that we currently use.

22 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Okay. Thank you.

23 Okay. I'm so glad we've had this time together. Okay.

24 This is the last question. Okay. Is DCAS
25 confident that it will continue to have a consistent

1
2 supply of RD to power its fleet in accordance with
3 the requirements of this bill? Second part, could
4 upcoming changes to federal biofuel regulations and
5 tax credits affect the supply of RD in New York City?

6 CHIEF FLEET OFFICER KERNAN: In our
7 program now, which is in year three, we have not had
8 any supply issues continuing with renewable diesel.
9 The whole fleet is being sourced reliably today. We
10 grew the program to the vessels, and most of the
11 vessel fuel is the Staten Island Ferry, but we're
12 going to hopefully check off the DEP, and then we're
13 working with police, fire. Parks already uses
14 renewable diesel for its smaller marina program. So
15 as of this point, we've had no disruption. As we all
16 know, there's a lot happening in federal policy that
17 impacts sustainability in general. I think it's fair
18 to say that there has been a more favorable
19 environment for biofuels than some other approaches
20 like electrification, but we are bullish on both. We
21 are going to keep pursuing electrification. There
22 have been tailwinds. There's no question there's
23 tailwinds in the electric industry, and we're going
24 to keep pursuing biofuels based on our conversations,
25

1
2 and I think you'll hear more from the industry in a
3 few minutes. We feel that there will be a steady...

4 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Yeah, I think it's
5 probably fair to say that the industry sees, you
6 know, the market for RD is going to ramp up. I don't
7 want to speak for them. I'll ask them myself, and no,
8 that's great. I really appreciate it. And, Keith,
9 when it comes to this stuff, I mean, everybody knows
10 who you are. Everyone knows what we're doing, and you
11 and every member of this panel really has given great
12 service towards not only doing it but making people
13 understand it and get other agencies to get on board
14 with it. I mean, like, none of this is easy, and I
15 could just sit up here and put on a hat and stuff
16 like that, but, you know, you folks really make it
17 happen on the ground and create markets and just do
18 amazing things that help New York City to be more
19 sustainable and to have kind of an all, you know, to
20 make progress on all frontiers. Everyone likes
21 electrification. Last I looked, though, I mean, how
22 is offshore wind looking? Not too good, you know. How
23 about Clean Path? Dead, you know. Champlain-Hudson?
24 Okay, so, like, two legs of the triad or whatever are
25 not there. And, you know, this is not me. Like, I

1
2 didn't do this, but, you know, the State wants to -
3 what is it? The whole state, you know, 70 percent
4 renewable by 2030, 100 percent renewable by 2040? I
5 don't think so. So, you know, we have to make
6 progress everywhere we can. And so constantly get
7 cleaner, greener, and, you know, reduce greenhouse
8 gas emissions and, you know, reduce other, you know,
9 criteria air pollutants. I mean, people think that,
10 you know, New York City, 300 square miles of New York
11 City, has the ability to move the worldwide GHG
12 climate problem. I'm a geologist. The Earth is 193
13 million square miles. We're 314. We're not moving the
14 needle. That doesn't mean don't do it. Just everyone
15 should do their part. Everybody should vote.
16 Everybody should, you know, clean up after their
17 dogs. Everyone should do everything that they're, you
18 know, supposed to do. But, you know, one benefit that
19 very few people talk about, you know, when it comes
20 to what we're doing to the climate, you know, there
21 is a concomitant, you know, reduction in, you know,
22 criteria air pollutant production. And that gives us,
23 so like the climate battle is well worth fighting,
24 you know, just for the local clean air benefits we're
25 going to get regarding the reduction in, you know,

1
2 criteria air pollutants as regulated by the Clean Air
3 Act. So, that's how I first, you know, when I did the
4 first climate law in New York City, I said it would
5 be a good thing to do. But, you know, the benefit
6 would be, you know, the real, to me, local benefit
7 would be the, you know, reduction in, you know,
8 criteria air pollution. And, you know, pollutants by
9 the, you know, Clean Air Act criteria pollutants,
10 that is a real tangible good thing. So, you know, no
11 climate, you know, effort is ever wasted because we
12 get, you know, we're not moving the needle on
13 climate. That's not happening. But it's just for
14 local air quality. I mean, respiratory health, it's
15 all very important. And I really appreciate this
16 panel and everything that you've done. And with that,
17 I'll say thank you. And CLA, go back and tell the
18 Mayor that they did a good job, okay? Okay. Or I
19 could text him right now. Yeah. Yeah. I'm not going
20 to text him because he knows. He knows, you know.
21 We've spoken a couple times. I'm like, you're good
22 with Keith, right? Because everybody's good with
23 Keith, you know, so. I said that on the record.
24 That's not actually true. He didn't say that. But he

1 knows. He knows. Okay. Thanks very much. Really
2 appreciate it.
3

4 Okay. We're going to go right into public
5 testimony, public comment period. I'm legally
6 required to read this. Okay.

7 I now open the hearing for public
8 testimony. I remind members of the public that this
9 is a formal government proceeding and that decorum
10 shall be observed at all times. As such, members of
11 the public shall remain silent at all times.

12 The witness table is reserved for people
13 who wish to testify. No video recording or
14 photography is allowed from the witness table.
15 Further, members of the public may not present audio
16 or video recordings as testimony, but may submit
17 transcripts of such recordings to the Sergeant-at-
18 Arms for inclusion in the hearing record.

19 If you wish to speak at today's hearing,
20 as many have already done, please fill out an
21 appearance card with the Sergeant-at-Arms and wait to
22 be recognized. When recognized, you will have two
23 minutes to speak on today's hearing topic, but
24 because I'm in a good mood, it's going to be three
25 minutes. Okay? You've waited a long time. At least

1
2 get your three minutes in. Three minutes to speak on
3 today's hearing topic, GHG emission reduction through
4 renewable diesel and the legislation being heard
5 today.

6 If you have a written statement or
7 additional written testimony you wish to submit for
8 the record, please provide a copy of that testimony
9 to the Sergeant-at-Arms. You may also email written
10 testimony to testimony@council.nyc.gov within 72
11 hours of this hearing. Audio and video recordings
12 will not be accepted. That's it for now, right? Okay.

13 And so I'm going to call the first panel,
14 and as they're getting settled, I have to step out
15 for a second so you can all get settled, and then
16 I'll be back in a minute.

17 First witness is Rich Kassel,
18 representing AJW. I know Rich for decades for all of
19 his work for the NRDC for, yeah, like when you have
20 to figure out how many decades he worked there. You
21 know you've got somebody who's been laboring in the
22 environmental venue for a real long time. Jay
23 Gardner. Oh, Joy. Joy, pardon me. Joy Gardner, Empire
24 Clean Cities, and Stephen Dodge. Is that right? Okay.

1
2 Stephen Dodge, okay, also from the Clean Fuels
3 Alliance.

4 As I said, I just have to step out for a
5 minute, but, you know, oh, yeah, so we're just going
6 to have just a brief recess until I get back. You
7 should bring out the hors d'oeuvres now. This is a
8 good time for them to bring them out.

9 Yeah. So, why don't we start with Rich.

10 RICH KASSEL: All right. Good afternoon,
11 Chairman Gennaro, Members of the Committee. My name
12 is Rich Kassel. Thank you for the opportunity to
13 testify today. I'm a partner at AJW. We're a
14 decarbonization-focused policy advisory firm. I also
15 serve on a number of environmental boards, including
16 LCV, Tri-State Transportation Campaign, and some
17 others, but today I'm testifying on behalf of AJW.

18 So, I don't want to repeat what's been
19 said because the panel before us did a fantastic job.
20 So, I just want to focus on three quick points on why
21 adding renewable diesel to the decarbonization
22 strategies for both the building and the vehicle
23 sector is pragmatic, why it's cost-effective, and why
24 it makes a lot of sense, especially in an era of
25 federal rollbacks of standards, tax credits, and

1
2 other incentives. So, I'll make three quick points
3 with my 2 minutes and 12 seconds. First, this is all
4 about existing vehicles and existing buildings. As
5 was pointed out before, renewable diesel is not
6 competing with electrification. Where vehicles and
7 buildings are ready to electrify, fantastic. That's
8 the gold standard. Where renewable diesel plays the
9 key role is vehicles and buildings where
10 electrification either isn't possible or it's going
11 to be so delayed until it actually happens that the
12 real choice is, do we do renewable diesel, which
13 provides a greenhouse benefit and a health benefit,
14 to help the five-year-old asthmatics who are in the
15 city today, or do we just keep pumping out petroleum
16 fossil fuel diesel? For me, the answer is obvious.
17 It's renewable diesel. We're not competing with
18 electrification. It's a yes, and. The second point
19 is, last fall, my firm analyzed HR1, the One Big,
20 Beautiful Act, that eliminated most of the tax
21 credits that underlie all of our assumptions about
22 what's cost-effective. That includes EV tax credits.
23 It includes credits for energy efficiency, rooftop
24 solar. It could go on and on and on. And the bottom
25 line is the City will lose billions, New York will

1
2 lose billions of dollars of tax credits and other
3 incentives that are key to reaching our climate
4 goals, both buildings and vehicles. But I think the
5 building sector is where it's really important for
6 today because renewable diesel in the building sector
7 is brand new. Yet it's so important because what
8 renewable diesel does in the building sector is it's
9 decarbonizing and improving the environmental
10 performance of the heating oil that will continue to
11 be used in thousands of New York City buildings. And
12 it's a way for us to identify yet another pragmatic,
13 cost-effective decarbonization strategy in an era of
14 federal rollbacks. We can't be in a situation where
15 we only allow...

16 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Finish your thought,
17 and then I'll come back to you with questions, but go
18 ahead and just finish your thought.

19 RICH KASSEL: And my last and final
20 thought is really quick, which is if DCAS is already
21 using renewable diesel in its vehicles, why do we
22 need to codify it? And the answer is codifying what
23 DCAS is already doing is critically important because
24 it sends a market signal to the industry. The fuel
25 providers, the vehicle providers, to everybody along

1 the supply chain that the New York market is here.
2 It's consistent. It's not going anywhere, no matter
3 what the federal government does, no matter what
4 other cities and states do. We're creating a stable
5 market here, and that signal is super important. So,
6 I'll pause there, and thank you.
7

8 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Thank you, Richard.
9 I really appreciate it. I really appreciate you being
10 here. Thank you.

11 Joy.

12 JOY GARDNER: Hi. Is this on? Okay, great.
13 So, thank you, Chairman Gennaro and
14 Committee Members, for hearing us today. My name is
15 Joy Gardner, Executive Director of Empire Clean
16 Cities. We're a 501(c)3 clean transportation non-
17 profit, and the U.S. Department of Energy's
18 Designated Clean Cities Coalition for New York City
19 and the Lower Hudson Valley.

20 For over two decades, we've worked with
21 fleets across the region to cut emissions, reduce
22 petroleum consumption, and accelerate clean
23 transportation in order to improve air quality for
24 New York City residents. I'm here in strong support
25 of the legislation, and a lot of what I'm going to

1 say is going to be pretty redundant, repetitive, but
2 I just want to go on record on our general support.

3
4 So, like others, I know that zero
5 emission is the end goal, and that's really where we
6 want to be as quickly as we can possibly get there.
7 New York City must continue leading on
8 electrification in order to meet its climate
9 commitments that you mentioned earlier and protect
10 our public health. But we can't electrify the
11 municipal fleet overnight, as Keith testified to
12 earlier. Heavy-duty vehicles, sanitation trucks,
13 emergency vehicles, public works equipment, and
14 marine vessels have long procurement cycles,
15 significant infrastructure needs, and as we heard
16 earlier, may not have the electric equivalent just
17 yet. Many diesel vehicles will also remain in service
18 for years just based on their life cycle. So, the
19 question isn't whether or not we transition, it's how
20 do we reduce the emissions right now while building
21 towards that future again as quickly as possible. So,
22 renewable diesel really provides an immediate and
23 practical solution. It's a drop-in fuel that requires
24 no engine modifications, no new fueling
25 infrastructure. That means the City can significantly

1
2 reduce life cycle, GHG, and harmful air pollutants
3 today using the vehicles already on the road. So, for
4 communities that have long borne the burden of diesel
5 emissions, particularly those near freight corridors
6 or industrial zones, these reductions really matter
7 and the time in which we take to make those
8 reductions matter. So, renewable diesel allows us to
9 cut emissions immediately while continuing to invest
10 in charging infrastructure and vehicle replacement.
11 So as stated before, it's not an either, and, or
12 choice. Renewable diesel complements electrification.
13 It serves as a bridge fuel, lowering emissions during
14 that transition period and ensuring that every
15 remaining diesel vehicle operates as cleanly as
16 possible, again, as quickly as possible. So, if New
17 York City is serious about meeting its climate and
18 environmental justice goals, we need to deploy every
19 proven tool in our toolkit. I also want to applaud
20 DCAS and agency fleet managers for their leadership
21 in deploying renewable diesel to date. They've been
22 true trailblazers, demonstrating that the fuel can be
23 integrated seamlessly into municipal operations while
24 delivering real emissions reductions. So, I will say
25 thank you, and that's the end of my thought.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Well, thank you,
3 Joy. And, you know, I want to thank everything that
4 Empire Clean Cities is doing. We appreciate your
5 participation and input. You know, we don't work in a
6 vacuum here, and all the good groups that work so
7 hard to try to make this a better, cleaner, more
8 environmentally clean city. I mean, without our
9 partners, we wouldn't know what to do. So we really
10 appreciate you being here today. Thank you very much
11 for your good testimony.

12 Stephen.

13 STEPHEN DODGE: Yeah. Thank you. For the
14 record, my name is Stephen Dodge, and I'm Director of
15 State Regulatory Affairs for Clean Fuels Alliance
16 America. Clean Fuels represents the farmers, the
17 producers, the distributors, and the end users for
18 all of the products our members produce, which
19 include biodiesel, renewable diesel, sustainable
20 aviation fuel, bioheat fuel for thermal space
21 heating, as well as maritime and railroad fuels.

22 Mr. Chairman, you may remember us as the
23 aforementioned National Biodiesel Board.

24 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Oh, right, right,
25 right.

1
2 STEPHEN DODGE: We changed our name
3 several years ago to more fully encompass our members
4 and their products, and we worked with you in
5 developing the first biodiesel law in New York City
6 in 2005.

7 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Yeah. We went out to
8 a restaurant. I read you guys the riot act and said,
9 look, you know, it's just like we have to, you know,
10 it's like we've got to get this right, and I'm
11 looking for, like, sustainability standard or
12 whatever. It went very well, and, you know, we
13 couldn't have done it without your cooperation.
14 Forget it. It was just no way. So, I really
15 appreciate that collaboration back then. Oh, this is
16 coming out of your time, but don't worry about it.
17 But, you know, thank you so much.

18 STEPHEN DODGE: Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: And look how far
20 we've come. Are you kidding?

21 STEPHEN DODGE: Took the words out of my
22 mouth.

23 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Yeah.

24 STEPHEN DODGE: And we are here to support
25 both Intros 554 and 555, and thank you, Mr. Chairman,

1 for filing these important proposals. I think the
2 term no-brainer is overused, but we firmly believe
3 that 554 is a no-brainer. I'm pleased that DCAS
4 already started the study process to the Council's
5 earlier point by scheduling a stakeholder meeting on
6 March 10th made from an increasingly diverse mix of
7 resources, such as recycled cooking oil, soybean oil,
8 and animal fats. Biodiesel and renewable diesel are
9 better, cleaner fuels that are available now for use
10 in existing diesel engines and heating furnaces and
11 boilers without modification. I think the success the
12 City has been having using RD on the transportation
13 side, where vehicle engines are more finely tuned
14 than heating appliances and where emissions are
15 regulated by federal and state laws, can easily be
16 replicated in the building sector. Renewable diesel,
17 like its biodiesel counterpart, reduces greenhouse
18 gas emissions by 70 percent on average, I think you
19 indicated a higher number in your opening remarks, as
20 well as co-pollutants. We all know the most important
21 ton of carbon we can reduce is the ton we reduce
22 today. Put another way, for every five years we wait,
23 we must reduce emissions by 13 times to have the same
24 climate impact.
25

1
2 And regarding 555, I have to tell you,
3 Clean Fuels talks about the success of the New York
4 City vehicle fleet transition all across the country.
5 I talk about it all the time. Aggressive
6 electrification, as Keith has pointed out, combined
7 with biomass-based diesel use in vehicles that cannot
8 easily be transitioned to EVs, has been a godsend to
9 the City, and particularly to those EJ communities
10 that are hardest hit by heavy-duty vehicle emissions.
11 Officially, including renewable diesel...

12 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Keep going, because
13 I took half your time.

14 STEPHEN DODGE: That's okay. I'm just on
15 the last point.

16 Officially, including renewable diesel, a
17 first cousin of biodiesel, here I go again, is
18 another no-brainer.

19 And to conclude, and Keith mentioned this
20 earlier, we do believe, though, and I think everyone
21 so far is in agreement, that the proposal should be
22 amended to allow for biodiesel blends up to 20
23 percent. The current version limits blends to 5
24 percent. OEMs recommend blends up to 20 percent, and
25 states like California, where it is now harder to buy

1
2 petroleum diesel than it is biomass-based diesel,
3 routinely provides blends of up to 20 percent. I
4 think the most common blend now is B10R90. So, this
5 will give DCAS the most flexibility to purchase fuels
6 that are cost-competitive and provide the same amount
7 of carbon reductions. So, I'm happy to take
8 questions. I appreciate this opportunity, and we look
9 forward to participating in the ID stakeholders
10 meeting next month.

11 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Thank you, Steve.
12 And also, now, is your organization based here, or
13 did you have to...

14 STEPHEN DODGE: I'm based here, but we are
15 based in Jefferson City, Missouri.

16 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: I see. Okay.

17 STEPHEN DODGE: But we have offices in the
18 West Coast.

19 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Yeah. Because I'm
20 going to say, I was kind of hoping you'd have to fly
21 halfway across the country in order to come here, you
22 know? Sometimes we get that. You get extra minutes if
23 you do that. But I've really enjoyed the
24 collaboration we've gotten. What do you guys call
25 you? It says right here. Clean Fuels Alliance, right?

1
2 America. Clean Fuels Alliance. We've come a long way
3 together. That's more than 20 years now.

4 STEPHEN DODGE: We've been around 30
5 years.

6 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Yeah.

7 STEPHEN DODGE: And a bunch of farmers got
8 together about 30-plus years ago and saying we can do
9 something with this excess soy oil that we were just
10 really throwing out.

11 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Right. Because you
12 get the bean, and then you're just like, no, but the
13 oil comes from the bean.

14 STEPHEN DODGE: Yeah. So, if you look at
15 the bean, about 80 percent is protein that's used for
16 foods and different things. 20 percent is oil. 10
17 percent of that is used for soy oil and other
18 applications. 10 percent prior to it being used as a
19 biodiesel feedstock was really a waste product. It
20 was thrown away.

21 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Oh, I see.

22 STEPHEN DODGE: And that's why with
23 biomass-based diesel, and when you look at crop-based
24 biomass-based diesel feedstocks, in addition to used
25 cooking oil and others, animal fats, yellow grease,

1
2 and so forth, the crop-based feedstocks, really, you
3 don't have the food for fuel argument that you do
4 with some other fuels like ethanol. Because the more
5 soy you grow, the more protein, the more food you
6 grow, and the more oil you produce. So that's another
7 benefit.

8 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: No. It all works,
9 and it's great. This is all on the record. And so on
10 we go to this enhanced world of biofuels that we're
11 trying to create, hand-in-hand with electrification.

12 And so this panel's been very
13 illuminating. I appreciate your being here and
14 waiting so patiently to testify and putting up with
15 my antics. And so thank you very much. I appreciate
16 it.

17 Next panel. Okay, the last in-person
18 panel. We have Kevin Garcia of New York City
19 Environmental Justice Alliance and Daniel Chu, also
20 with the New York City Environmental Justice
21 Alliance. We love Eddie and everyone who's part of
22 your organization. We look forward to your good
23 testimony. Oh, okay. Wait a minute. So, who's Kevin
24 and who's Daniel?

25 KEVIN GARCIA: I'm Kevin.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Okay. So, I'd say in
3 whatever order you want to go, just state your names
4 for the record and then proceed with your good
5 testimony.

6 DANIEL CHU: Sure. Good afternoon, Chair
7 Gennaro. My name is Daniel Chu. I'm the Senior Energy
8 Planner with the New York City Environmental Justice
9 Alliance. We are a non-profit organization that is
10 working for member community-based organizations
11 across all 13 neighborhoods in New York City and all
12 five boroughs on environmental justice goals. We have
13 a long history with you, obviously.

14 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Sure.

15 DANIEL CHU: You visited our office not so
16 long ago.

17 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Yeah.

18 DANIEL CHU: But we believe that some of
19 the substance of these bills are very concerning for
20 environmental justice communities, and we have some
21 very specific concerns, particularly around
22 environmental justice, public health, affordability,
23 and agriculture in the substance of these bills. We
24 submitted our testimony already online in the portal.

25 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: I got it.

1
2 DANIEL CHU: And I believe we have a copy
3 in front of you.

4 But I will today speak on the building
5 side of things on Intro. 554, and then my colleague,
6 Kevin, will speak on Intro. 555.

7 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Okay.

8 DANIEL CHU: On the building side of
9 things, New York City's Local Law 97 already mandates
10 that emissions reductions for large buildings be net
11 zero by 2050. New York City and State both have
12 legislative mandates for all electric buildings,
13 particularly many already in place for new
14 constructions. The State's climate law also mandates
15 that all state sectors must be net zero by 2050 with
16 strict limits on how much of these resources can be
17 offsetted as emissions. The 15 percent offset limit
18 means relying on offsets for building sector is
19 improbable given that operations such as heavy
20 manufacturing, port operations, as DCAS testified
21 earlier, and waste management require a significant
22 amount of energy that currently does not have an
23 electric alternative, which was the intended focus
24 for the offsets. The use of renewable diesel in
25 buildings also does not address localized indoor air

1 pollution, as detailed on NYC-EJA's concerns about
2 particular air emissions in our written testimony and
3 public health to the use of low-carbon fuels. The use
4 of renewable diesel in building operations either
5 stay mostly levelized or, in some cases, increase the
6 level of NOx emissions that may be particularly
7 detrimental in areas that already have a high
8 concentration of emitting resources, such as truck
9 traffic, waste transfer stations, and peaker power
10 plants. Children, older adults, and individuals with
11 respiratory illnesses are particularly vulnerable to
12 conditions of early death. I believe the American
13 Lung Association have also submitted testimony
14 regarding these public health concerns to this
15 Committee. Most of these infrastructures that are
16 polluting are sited in low-income people of color
17 communities in New York City that we represent.
18 Unlike the adoption of low-carbon fuels in
19 transportation solutions, the adoption of low-carbon
20 fuels for alleged building emissions reductions is
21 particularly concerning because it does not extend
22 the life of polluting building infrastructures.
23 Combustion-based boilers, heating resources have a
24 set lifespan, typically under 20 years. By the design
25

1
2 time, the equipment will either need substantial
3 replacement or repairs. Without evidence that the
4 adoption of renewable diesel is any cleaner than the
5 current use of ultra-low sulfur oil and natural gas,
6 and without the ability or need to extend the life of
7 this equipment, renewable diesel use as a heating oil
8 or heating alternative will only create unnecessary
9 market detrimental to environmental justice
10 communities.

11 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Thank you. Thank you
12 very much. I'll come back once you both testify.

13 KEVIN GARCIA: Good afternoon, Chair
14 Gennaro. My name is Kevin Garcia. I'm the Senior
15 Transportation Planner with the New York City
16 Environmental Justice Alliance. You're already
17 familiar with us, as Daniel shared.

18 So, Intro. 0555 creates a policy
19 contradiction by requiring the City to invest in
20 renewable diesel procurement and distribution, just
21 as Local Law 140's electrification mandates have
22 taken effect. Instead of directing capital and
23 operational funds towards charging infrastructure,
24 grid upgrades, workforce training, and electric
25 vehicle procurement, if Intro. 0555 is passed, the

1 City would be expanding reliance on fossil fuels, and
2 this would lock the City into combustion
3 infrastructure and divert attention from meeting
4 emissions reduction mandates. Furthermore,
5 environmental justice communities across the five
6 boroughs cannot afford any delays in air pollution
7 reduction through incremental fuel substitutes.
8 Communities most impacted by transportation-related
9 air pollution, particularly those neighborhoods near
10 highways, bus depots and ports have waited decades
11 for relief. Transitioning the City's fleet to
12 renewable diesel and biodiesel would continue the
13 harm environmental justice communities experience
14 today for years to come. Moreover, prioritizing the
15 City's fleet electrification can strengthen grid
16 reliability. City-owned electric vehicles can serve
17 as flexible loads and as distributed storage
18 resources through vehicle to grid integration.
19 Switching fuels and eliminating tailpipe emissions
20 does not fulfill the City's mandates. Given the
21 current climate and budget pressures, New York City
22 must prioritize investments that eliminate emissions
23 rather than marginally reducing them and wasting
24 resources. The City has already determined that zero
25

1
2 emission vehicles are the mandate, and the use of
3 renewable diesel and biodiesel should be limited to
4 only hard-to-electrify uses such as shipping and
5 aviation and not in low and medium duty vehicles
6 where electric vehicles are widely available. Thank
7 you.

8 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Well, we certainly
9 have a lot to talk about, and so rather than have
10 like a lot of back and forth now, I mean, you know,
11 we got to like get with you guys and the
12 Environmental Justice Alliance. And, you know, to
13 that end, asking both Counsel to the Committee on
14 behalf of the Staff that services this Committee and
15 my Legislative Director, Josh, who I want you to meet
16 before you leave, and so, you know, I'd like the
17 Staff of the Committee along with my Legislative
18 Director to have an opportunity to hear out in great
19 detail, you know, after reading their written
20 testimony. This is a longer conversation, but I
21 pledge to you to facilitate the conversation. That
22 way it won't be three minutes and three minutes.
23 It'll be an hour, an hour and a half or like whatever
24 it needs to be. Because, you know, we know and trust
25 your organization and we want to make sure that we're

1
2 talking the same language and that we're
3 understanding you and you're understanding us, and so
4 let's get that set up and thank you for your very,
5 very valuable contribution to this hearing today. I
6 really appreciate it.

7 You bet. You bet. Say hi to Eddie for me.

8 Okay. Okay.

9 Okay. We will now turn to remote
10 testimony. Once your name is called, a Member of our
11 Staff will unmute you and the Sergeant-at-Arms will
12 give you the go ahead to begin. Please wait for the
13 Sergeant-at-Arms to announce that you may begin
14 before delivering your testimony.

15 I understand we have two witnesses. Our
16 first witness is Alia Soomro from League of
17 Conservation Voters. She's a frequent flyer in this
18 Committee for sure, and we look forward to her good
19 testimony. So, Sergeant, I guess you'd say something
20 or whatever, right?

21 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

22 ALIA SOOMRO: Great. Good afternoon,
23 Council Member Gennaro. My name is Alia Soomro, and
24 I'm the Deputy Director for New York City Policy at
25

1 the New York League of Conservation Voters. I will
2 submit longer written comments.

3
4 To reduce our greenhouse gas emissions
5 and improve air quality and public health, we need a
6 comprehensive set of climate policies and incentives.
7 NYLCV supports the full electrification of buildings
8 and transportation, such as Local Law 140 of 2023.

9 For instances that are currently challenging to
10 electrify, such as electric heavy-duty vehicles like
11 snowplows and ambulances and maritime fleets that are
12 not currently viable at scale, renewable diesel and
13 certain other biofuels can, when appropriate,
14 guardrails to ensure they actually have lower
15 emissions than fossil fuel alternatives, they can
16 serve as a bridge fuel in the short to medium term as
17 costs come down and as viable zero-emission versions
18 are developed and brought to market. Renewable
19 diesel, or RD, is one avenue the City has taken in
20 regards to its fleet. The onboarding of hybrid and
21 EVs is another that we cannot lose sight of.

22 According to the 2025 Mayor's Management Report,
23 we've seen progress with DCAS' efforts to electrify
24 the City's fleet, and we hope to see continued
25 progress when it comes to the purchase of EVs and the

1
2 installation of more charging infrastructure. In the
3 interim, RD can reduce lifecycle greenhouse gas
4 emissions by up to 60 percent as compared to regular
5 diesel, all while meeting the same operating
6 specifications as regular diesel. This is one of the
7 reasons why we support Intro. 555, sponsored by
8 Council Member Gennaro. This bill will help the City
9 continue the work they've been doing when it comes to
10 making our City's fleet more sustainable while
11 working towards a zero-emission future. We also urge
12 the City to continue working towards a more
13 sustainable maritime fleet, and we appreciate that
14 the Staten Island Ferry has transitioned to RD in
15 June 2025. With appropriate guardrails to ensure that
16 RD can actually have lower emissions than fossil fuel
17 alternatives, it can serve as a bridge fuel for the
18 short to medium term as costs come down and as viable
19 zero-emission versions are developed and brought to
20 market for hard-to-electrify fleets. Thank you for
21 the opportunity to comment, and we look forward to
22 working with you.

23 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Thank you very much,
24 and please give my regards to Julie and everyone at
25 LCB. We appreciate your relationship with this

1
2 Committee and how we can always depend upon you being
3 a witness. We appreciate that. Thank you.

4 Next witness is Thomas Butcher, National
5 Oilheat Research Alliance. Thomas Butcher, National
6 Oilheat Research Alliance.

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: You may begin.

8 THOMAS BUTCHER: Thank you, Council Member
9 Gennaro, for the opportunity to speak. I have not
10 spoken with this Committee before, so I really
11 appreciate it. I'm the Technical Director of NORA and
12 a mechanical engineer by training. NORA was
13 authorized by Congress in 2000 to provide funding
14 that enables the liquid fuel heating industry to
15 provide a more efficient, more reliable, and lower
16 carbon home heating option for hot water to American
17 consumers. NORA's mission is centered around these
18 primary objectives, research and development, carbon
19 reduction, energy efficiency, and professional
20 education and consumer education. NORA operates a
21 research and education center in Plainview, New York,
22 here. Since its formation, NORA has been very
23 involved with R and D on low-carbon fuels for
24 residential, commercial, and institutional buildings.
25 Much of this is focused on biodiesel, but there's

1
2 been considerable focus also on renewable diesel and
3 other more novel fuels. A great deal more information
4 is on our website, noraweb.org. A lot of publications
5 there. In the NORA lab, studies including fuel
6 properties, steady state and cyclic combustion
7 performance, flame safety, sensor response, fuel pump
8 durability, elastomer compatibility, yellow metals,
9 interactions with fuels, long-term storage stability,
10 filterability, and pump durability have all been
11 conducted.

12 Renewable diesel, also known as
13 hydrogenated vegetable oil, HVO, or paraffinic
14 heating oil. It is produced by combining waste
15 vegetable oil and hydrogen over a catalyst at
16 elevated pressure and temperature. A life cycle
17 carbon reduction is typically taken as 75 percent. I
18 heard a different number before, but okay. This can
19 increase in the future as more renewable practices
20 are adopted in feedstock production and conversion.
21 From its production process, RD has no aromatics. In
22 diesel engine studies, aromatics have been shown to
23 directly correlate with particulate emissions, so
24 it's a cleaner fuel. Properties of heating fuels in
25 the U.S. are prescribed in ASTM D396 standard. Blends

1 of up to 5 percent biodiesel are considered
2 equivalent to traditional number two. Blends of up to
3 20 percent have a separate designation and are in
4 this standard, but are fully defined. And a
5 modification to this standard to go up to 50 percent
6 biodiesel blends is currently under consideration at
7 ASTM. Renewable diesel is an oxygen-free hydrocarbon
8 and, as such, meets the definitions and property
9 specifications for number two heating oil in the D396
10 standard. There isn't a separate spec for RD as a
11 heating fuel. For this reason, equipment which is
12 listed, that is, typically approved against UL
13 standards.
14

15 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: I'm just saying
16 please continue. I'm very intrigued by your
17 testimony.

18 THOMAS BUTCHER: Oh, thank you. So,
19 equipment approved for number two heating oil is
20 approved for use with RD. Both RD and BD are fully
21 miscible with heating oil. Testing in our lab has not
22 identified any concerns with RD in unmodified heating
23 equipment. In some cases, however, because the flame
24 is a cleaner flame, there's less light comes back.
25 And there may be a problem with the controls,

1 particularly on smaller residential applications. But
2 replacement with a modern flame safety control can
3 resolve that. NORA is currently conducting related
4 field trials in 133 homes across the Northeast. These
5 field tests include blends of 80 percent RD, 20
6 percent biodiesel, and 50/50 blends. As part of this,
7 NORA is tracking fuel quality changes and service
8 requirements. At the start of this field study, the
9 home tanks were not emptied nor cleaned. Rather, the
10 test fuel blend was simply delivered on top of the
11 existing fuel remaining. This test is ending at the
12 end of the current heating season and has been going
13 very well. NORA also collaborates with Euro Fuels, an
14 organization with similar goals in Europe. This group
15 has conducted extensive testing with RD in a range of
16 applications across the continent of Europe and,
17 based on these tests, is very enthusiastic about this
18 fuel as a low-cost carbonization strategy moving
19 forward. Numerous burner and fuel system component
20 manufacturers have tested RD in their equipment. NORA
21 is not aware of any manufacturers that have raised
22 concern about RD use in their pumps, burners, or
23 components.
24

1
2 Finally, I'd like to strongly endorse the
3 interest of the City in New York in exploring pilot
4 tests of RD use in heating equipment and see this as
5 a very practical, low-investment cost decarbonization
6 approach with really a low level of risk. As
7 appropriate, NORA stands ready and willing to provide
8 technical support for such an effort. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Thank you very much
10 for your good testimony. We appreciate your
11 willingness to give us the benefit of your expertise
12 as we take these bills down the track and so very
13 grateful not only for the promise of some assistance
14 should we need that, but also making your
15 acquaintance and sort of building a bridge between
16 your organization and this Committee. So, I think
17 this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship. How
18 about that? There are people in this room who will
19 not get the reference, but I think you do. I think
20 the movie came out in whatever, Casablanca, what,
21 1945, whatever it was. And so really appreciate your
22 presence today and our ongoing collaboration, which
23 begins now. Thank you.

24 Okay. If we inadvertently missed anyone
25 who registered to testify today and has yet to be

1
2 called, please use the Zoom raise hand function if
3 you are testifying remotely, and you will be called
4 in the order that your hand has been raised.

5 If you are testifying in person, please
6 come to the dais or see the Sergeant.

7 Okay. Seeing none, I will now close the
8 hearing. Thank you to the members of the
9 Administration and the members of the public who have
10 joined us today. This hearing is hereby adjourned.

11 [GAVEL]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date February 28, 2026