

Toxics Reporting Secure in New Jersey, For Now

A misguided effort by the Whitman administration to amend New Jersey's Pollution Prevention Act was narrowly averted in February, thanks to strong opposition from worker and environmental advocates, including INFORM. The proposed rules would have exempted many companies covered by the law from the requirement that they report on steps they are taking to cut back on toxic chemicals used in the manufacture of a wide range of consumer and industrial products. According to Jasmine Vasavada, toxics advocate for the New Jersey Public Interest Research Group, "INFORM's technical analysis was a potent weapon in our effort to convince the Department of Environmental Protection that the amendment would actually *discourage* pollution prevention, and therefore posed a serious danger to public health and the environment in New Jersey."

Use Versus Waste

Adopted nearly a decade ago, New Jersey's law requires companies that use at

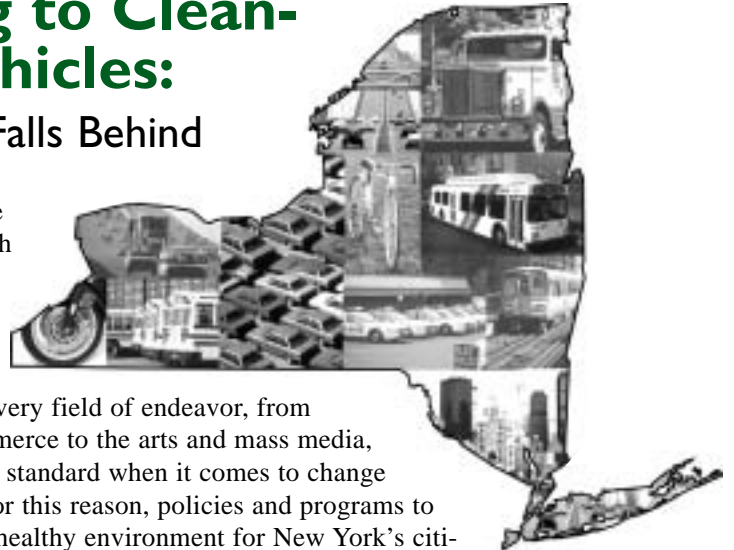
least 10,000 pounds per year of a toxic chemical to submit a "pollution prevention plan" to the state Dept. of Environmental Protection, outlining efforts to reduce either their use of the substance or the pollution resulting



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Shifting to Clean-Fuel Vehicles: New York Falls Behind

Out with the old, in with the new — it's a saying that could serve as New York's motto. In nearly every field of endeavor, from business and commerce to the arts and mass media, New York sets the standard when it comes to change and innovation. For this reason, policies and programs to ensure a safe and healthy environment for New York's citizens have particular significance nationwide.



An especially important priority for New York is the transition to vehicles powered by cleaner transportation fuels. Of the state's 18 million citizens, approximately 14 million, or 77 percent, live in areas with unhealthy air. The source of much of this pollution is oil- and diesel-burning vehicle exhaust — a major threat to human health and a key contributor to global climate change.

In 1997, INFORM's *Spotlight on New York* described a variety of promising initiatives under way in New York State and City to spur the shift to compressed natural gas (CNG) and other alternative fuels. But three years later, INFORM's investigation of these programs' achievements to date (documented in the new report, *Clean Transportation for New York: A Long Road Ahead*) paints a far less rosy picture. Our conclusion: much more energy and commitment are needed to turn New York's array of clean-fuel initiatives into a focused and comprehensive program that can make a significant impact.

Clean Vehicle Shortfall

The bottom line is that only 14,000 of New York's 10 million vehicles — a mere 0.14 percent — are currently running on clean fuels. Rather than taking a leadership role, New York has, in recent years, been slow to get significant numbers of alternative-fuel vehicles (AFVs) on its roads and highways and on the streets of its cities.

In 1997, for example, New York's legislature enacted a generous package of tax credits and exemptions to encourage acquisition of AFVs and the establishment of clean-fuel refueling stations. But it has failed to promote and publicize this program or the high-stakes environmental and health risks that underlie it. This is one reason why only a handful of fleet owners have so far taken advantage of the state's clean-fuel vehicle incentive program.

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Letter from the President

Carpe Diem, New York



As we enter a new millennium, safeguarding the resources of New York and ensuring a clean and healthy environment for its citizens

have never been more important. Especially crucial is progress in the shift to clean and domestically plentiful fuels like natural gas, since New York has some of the most severe transportation-related air pollution in the country and relies on foreign sources for a staggering 90 percent of its oil. Mandates aimed at achieving this shift already exist at the highest government levels, from the US Energy Policy Act and Clean Air Act amendments of the early 1990s to the 1997 Kyoto Accord seeking international collaboration in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The lead story in this issue describes some of the findings of INFORM's recent report, *Clean Transportation for New York*, which assesses the use of cleaner transportation fuels and

advanced vehicles in the Empire State. The report documents the policies and programs aimed at putting clean-fuel vehicles on the road in New York State and City — the steps that have been taken so far and the challenges that remain in the way of further progress.

Some of the most encouraging initiatives include Governor Pataki's commitment to adopt California's stringent LEV II program, which would require that a growing number of zero-emission vehicles be offered for sale in New York; the purchase of more than 500 alternative-fuel vehicles (AFVs) for state agency fleets; and the impressive initiatives undertaken by New York City's Dept. of Transportation and the Long Island Bus Company to convert their entire fleets to natural gas.

But despite these and other encouraging initiatives, resistance to change in some important quarters has impeded progress in getting significant numbers of AFVs on New York's roadways. In particular, the state-chartered Metropolitan Transportation Authority agreed only recently to begin purchasing more buses fueled by clean natural gas for New York City Transit — the

nation's largest municipal bus fleet. Inaction has also characterized the shift to natural gas by the city's 12,000 taxicabs, despite the availability of state funds and tax credits to cover the incremental costs of vehicle acquisition. This is due in large part to the dearth of natural gas refueling stations in Manhattan. In New York State as a whole, there are only about 200 public and private alternative-fuel refueling stations, compared to 6000 retail gas stations. Yet little has been done to encourage the acquisition and use of AFVs by expanding the state's limited refueling infrastructure.

The bottom line is that only 14,000 of New York's 10 million vehicles — a mere 0.14 percent — are powered by clean fuels. Largely for this reason, 77 percent of the state's population lives in areas with unhealthy air.

But it is not too late for New York to assume a leadership role in the transition to clean fuels. *Clean Transportation for New York* lays out 12 steps that would show our country and the world that New York puts a high priority on protecting the environment, the health of its citizens, and the stability of the earth's climate. Every one of New York's 18 million citizens can be an important player by advocating for these changes and rewarding state and city leaders who get out in front. The shift to clean fuels is not just a matter for technical and legal debate. Rather, for those of us who wish to bequeath a resource-rich and healthy world to our children, it is one of today's most crucial arenas for action.

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a member of **Earth Share**

Training Businesses to Close the Loop

As part of an ongoing waste prevention campaign to encourage the purchase of environmentally preferable products by New York City government, INFORM is hosting a series of training workshops for city agencies and businesses. Sponsored by the Buy Recycled Alliance of New York (BRANY), the monthly sessions provide information on waste prevention strategies, recycled-content product options, and local vendors of environmentally preferable goods and services. Recent workshops have focused on computer reuse and recycling, recycled-content printing and writing paper, carpet recycling, and environmentally preferable products for vehicle fleets, such as retreaded tires, re-refined motor oil, and vegetable-based engine lubricants.

Computers are an especially problematic waste stream because they become outmoded so quickly. Of the estimated 24 million computers replaced last year in the United States, only 14 percent (3.3 million) were recycled or donated; the rest — about 20.6 million — were landfilled, incinerated, shipped as waste export, or placed in temporary storage. Discarded computers are a serious environmental concern because they contain highly toxic materials such as lead, cadmium, and beryllium. According to the newsletter of the Demanufacturing Partnership Program at Rutgers University, discarded computer equipment accounts for 70 percent of the toxins in landfills. Nonetheless, one company recently announced that a “disposable” computer would soon be available.

At the BRANY workshop on computer reuse and recycling, INFORM research associate Amy Hughes presented a hierarchy of preferred strategies for reducing this growing waste stream. Among the recommendations:

- **Refurbish or upgrade existing equipment.** Computer refurbishers add memory and other accessories and fix or replace broken parts. This strategy delays a computer’s entry into the waste stream and reduces demand for new equipment.
- **Purchase used or refurbished equipment.** This can be a good option when budgets are limited or equipment is needed for short-term use only.
- **Shop the city’s surplus warehouse for used equipment.** New York maintains a warehouse of used furniture, office supplies, and electronic equipment available only to city agencies.



Share the Technology

A number of organizations in and around New York City offer remanufactured or used computer systems and/or installation services free of charge or at low cost to nonprofits. Here, a volunteer at Share the Technology, in New Jersey, tests a used computer that will be passed along to a school or other not-for-profit organization.

When new equipment is the only option:

- **Choose items that can meet future needs or be upgraded.** Though initial costs may be higher, buying computers with expandable memory and other upgradable features is often cheaper in the long run than replacing entire systems.

- **Require vendors to take back their equipment when it becomes outmoded.** Writing “take-back” requirements into contracts and bidding documents for new equipment is an effective way to preempt future disposal problems. Contracts can also specify that installers refurbish, donate, or recycle equipment being replaced, regardless of its make or original installer.
- **Consider leasing or renting instead of purchasing computers outright.** In these arrangements, vendors are automatically required to take back their used equipment, which provides an incentive to design durable items that can be easily dismantled and reused.
- **Make a donation to an organization that distributes used computers to schools, charities, and other institutions.** In New York City, the organization Per Scholas trains previously unemployed individuals to remanufacture donated computers, which are then sold to schools at bargain prices.

To facilitate procurement of waste-preventing products by New York City purchasing agents, INFORM has prepared a series of fact sheets that describe the economic and environmental benefits of buying and using refurbished, remanufactured, and recycled products. Included are lists of businesses and nonprofit organizations in the New York metropolitan area that reuse, refurbish, and recycle used products, that rent or lease products, and that donate or sell used products to schools and charities. Fact sheets are available on computer equipment, carpeting, and toner cartridges for laser and inkjet printers. ❖

For more information on the NYC waste prevention campaign, contact Amy Hughes at 361-2400, ext. 248, or by e-mail at hughes@informinc.org.

Shifting to Clean-Fuel Vehicles (continued from page 1)

Diesel's Long Good-bye

Vitally important, particularly in New York's urban areas, is the shift to clean fuels of buses and other diesel-burning vehicles. Diesel exhaust has been implicated in health problems ranging from respiratory infections and asthma to cancer, with children being especially vulnerable. In New York City, the rate of childhood hospitalizations for asthma increased 18 percent between 1986 and 1994.

Around the country, transit agencies are working to improve air quality in their communities by converting their bus fleets to clean natural gas. Of new municipal bus orders, 31 percent are for vehicles fueled by CNG. Joining this national trend, the Central New York Regional Transportation Authority in Syracuse, the Long Island Bus System in Nassau County and Queens, and the Dept. of Transportation in New York City are all committed to converting their fleets entirely to CNG.

Yet New York City Transit — the nation's largest municipal fleet, with 4300 buses — has for years dragged its feet in making this obviously beneficial transition. Even after pressure from environmentalists in 1996 elicited a promise from the Metropolitan Transportation Authority to purchase 500 clean-fuel buses for NYCT within five years, only 79 CNG buses were running on city streets by March of this year, with an order pending for 190 more. While the MTA's Long Island Bus fleet is well on its way to full conversion to natural gas, the agency's hotly debated new capital plan calls for the purchase of 800 diesel buses for New York Transit over the next five years.



This hybrid bus runs on batteries that get their charge from an internal combustion engine fueled by compressed natural gas. It was developed with funding from the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority and tested in the mid-'90s at seven transit agencies throughout New York State. The first hybrid electric-CNG bus to see real-world transit service, it confirmed the viability of this clean-fuel technology.

Clean-Fuel Pumps: Few and Far Between

New York is lagging behind other states in the transition to clean fuels, and one reason is a dearth of public and private clean-fuel refueling stations — about 200 in all, compared to 6000 retail gas stations. Fleet owners can only be expected to invest in AFVs if there are enough pumps available to fuel them.

Convenient and well-distributed refueling stations are especially important along major highway corridors, but

only 10 CNG refueling stations are open to the public within range of the New York State Thruway west of Albany, and none are available on or near the thruway's eastern portion. A promising sign is the possible development by the state's Department of Transportation and the Thruway Authority of two CNG fueling stations between Albany and New York City. This could be an important first step in a concerted effort to increase the number of clean-fuel refueling stations throughout the state.

In New York City, there are eight public CNG refueling stations in Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island and another eight in Manhattan. This limited infrastructure is impeding the switch to natural gas of the city's 12,000 taxis — despite the availability of state funds and tax credits to cover the incremental cost of vehicle acquisition. The city's cabs are an important target for alternative fuels because they are heavily used day and night in densely populated areas. So far, however, only 290 taxis, or 2 percent of the total fleet, are running on natural gas.

CNG Hailed by Taxi Fleets Nationwide

In the absence of an adequate, convenient, and reliable refueling infrastructure, taxi fleet owners in New York City are justifiably reluctant to buy CNG cabs. But without CNG vehicles on the roads, there is little incentive to invest in that infrastructure. This catch-22 is a major challenge that other cities are striving to overcome. Atlanta, for example, has 86 CNG refueling stations compared to New York's 20, and the city's Checker Cab Co. has set a goal for 2000 of 50 percent CNG taxis. In California, Long Beach/West Hollywood has established a network of 37 CNG refueling stations. At hearings held last winter by the city's Taxi and Limousine Commission, INFORM provided documentation of the cost benefits of CNG cabs. In Montgomery County, MD, for example, Barwood Cab Co. found that its CNG fleet reduced operating costs by 25 percent compared to conventional cabs.

Time to Catch Up

Although the impetus behind New York's clean transportation programs seems to have flagged, it is not too late for the state to assume a leadership role in the crucial transition to AFVs. An important first step is simply to acknowledge that New York cannot meet federal air quality standards without significantly increasing its population of clean-fuel vehicles. It was this recognition that led California — a decade ago — to adopt the stringent emissions control strategies embodied in its low-emissions vehicle (LEV) program and, in 1999, the even stricter standards known as LEV II. Governor Pataki has initiated rule-making to adopt LEV II in New York, and the legislature would do well to follow his lead by providing strong support for this ambitious program.

In New York City, accelerating the shift to natural gas of New York Transit's bus fleet is perhaps the most crucial short-term goal. By ordering more CNG buses, the state-chartered MTA can show the nation and the world that New York puts a high priority on protecting the environment and the health of its citizens. The fact that New York Transit's diesel costs have risen 400 percent since 1998, while the cost of CNG has declined 3 percent, is just one more reason why the time is ripe for a full-scale switch to CNG by New York City's buses. ❖

For more information, see *Clean Transportation for New York: A Long Road Ahead* on INFORM's web site.

New York's Drive to Clean Air

Some key steps recommended by INFORM for accelerating New York's shift to clean transportation:

- 1 **Throw the state's full weight behind its clean-fuel initiatives by actively promoting the benefits of AFVs.**
- 2 **Clarify whether or not the state is meeting its commitments under the Clean Air Act by providing US EPA with up-to-date emissions inventories, as required by law.**
- 3 **Publicize tax credits and exemptions offered by the state to purchasers of AFVs.**
- 4 **Tie AFV subsidies and tax exemptions to the emissions benefits of specific clean-fuel technologies.**
- 5 **Aggressively implement the strict emissions control strategies contained in California's LEV II program.**
- 6 **Focus procurement on urban buses, especially by New York City Transit, as well as on school buses, tour buses, and paratransit for the elderly and disabled.**
- 7 **Increase the number of public clean-fuel refueling stations along major highway corridors.**
- 8 **Encourage conversion of New York City's taxis to CNG by expanding Manhattan's refueling infrastructure.**
- 9 **Procure dedicated CNG vehicles rather than bi-fuel vehicles (which usually wind up running on gasoline) for New York City agency fleets.**
- 10 **Amend New York City's Local Law 6 to mandate replacement of heavy-duty diesel vehicles in agency fleets with clean-fuel vehicles.**

Presidential Plaudits

Earth Times has included Joanna Underwood in its list for the year 2000 of the world's most influential leaders for a sustainable environment. In the newspaper's profile of INFORM's president and founder, Underwood is described as "an environmental visionary who has been exposing the effects of corporate practices on the environment since 1974." At that time, she recalls, "the nation's pollution problems were underestimated and misunderstood." With the passage of the first Clean Air and Clean Water Acts, most Americans believed "there would be air that was safe to breathe and zero pollution of US waterways within a decade." Since then, we have learned the hard way how deep these problems really are. "Now we are living in the midst of a true global environmental crisis," says Underwood, but INFORM's achievements still give her reason for optimism. "Although businesses are generally characterized by tremendous inertia and resistance, I have confidence in the ability of human creativity and innovation to eventually bring about meaningful change — if the will to do so is there."



Joanna Underwood meeting with William Ruckelshaus, first EPA administrator, 1970-1973. "Without [INFORM's] invaluable contributions," says Ruckelshaus, "our policy debates would be less informed and our decisions that much less wise."

Toxics Reporting in New Jersey (continued from page 1)

from its use. Under the proposed amendment, companies could use up to a million pounds per year of the chemical without submitting a prevention plan, as long as their annual generation of waste from the substance was under 500 pounds.

Proponents argued that the change would reward companies that reduced waste by using toxic chemicals more efficiently. However, as INFORM senior research associate Alicia Culver explained at a public hearing on the amendment, this rationale is flawed in light of current knowledge about the threats posed by toxic chemicals.

When New Jersey passed its landmark law, industrial plant wastes were the exclusive focus of governmental and public concern, and “pollution prevention” meant efforts to reduce these

wastes at their source. While the proposed amendment would in fact have had this result, we now know that toxic chemicals *within* consumer products are another significant source of environmental contamination and a potential threat to public health. “Raising the reporting threshold,” said Culver, “would focus companies’ efforts on reducing waste at the end of the manufacturing process instead of reducing their use of hazardous chemicals overall.” Some companies might even be tempted to incorporate toxic waste into products to avoid the planning requirements.

Toxics in Products

The wisdom of emphasizing overall use rather than waste when it comes to industrial toxins is borne out by recent research conducted by INFORM (and presented in our

upcoming report, *Building Up to Danger: The Comparative Flow of Bioaccumulative Toxins from Factories in New Jersey and the Great Lakes Region*). Analysis of chemical use by industrial facilities in New Jersey showed that the vast majority of toxic materials used in manufacturing end up in products rather than waste.

“Hazardous chemicals are leaving factories in huge quantities as ingredients in products,” Culver explained. “Ultimately, items such as paints, cleaning solvents, batteries, light bulbs, and mercury thermometers can contaminate the environment and pose risks to workers and the public through leaks, spills, and improper disposal in landfills and incinerators.” For this reason, laws like New Jersey’s, which press companies to find less toxic feedstocks for their production

PURCHASING TOXICS-FREE

One of the most troubling classes of hazardous chemicals are persistent, bioaccumulative toxins (PBTs), substances that can persist in the environment and build up in the food chain to harmful levels. Associated with cancer and a range of reproductive, developmental, and neurological disorders, PBTs include heavy metals (such as lead and mercury), pesticides, and solvents found in a wide variety of consumer products. Underscoring the need to protect public health and the environment from these chemicals, the US Environmental Protection Agency recently directed federal, state, and local agencies to develop programs aimed at reducing PBT-containing waste by 50 percent by the year 2005.

INFORM is working in support of the EPA’s efforts by encouraging government agencies and other public institutions in New Jersey to minimize their procurement of PBT-containing products. For example, many

government agencies purchase leaded paint for roads and bridges because they are unaware that safer, lead-free substitutes exist. Likewise, there are alternatives to mercury thermometers, to paints and cleaning agents that contain chlorinated solvents, and to PBT-containing pesticides and wood preservatives.

The procurement practices of government agencies are important because of their enormous purchasing power: together, state and local governments spend about twice as much as the federal government — which is the single largest consumer of goods and services in the world. Many businesses design their goods and services to meet government specifications, so altering the purchasing policies of government agencies can stimulate businesses to provide more environmentally responsible goods and services. This has the added benefit of creating markets for these goods and services among the public at large.

Coming Attractions

needs, have potentially greater pollution prevention benefits than those mandating waste reduction alone.

Avoidance = Safety


Ever since the mid-'80s, when the US Environmental Protection Agency began requiring companies to report on the waste they generate from hundreds of hazardous chemicals, pollution prevention has focused on reducing toxic emissions through the smokestacks and pipelines of industrial plants. But history has shown that many health and environmental problems result not from industrial waste but from the use of products with toxic ingredients. Familiar examples include leaded house paint and the insecticide DDT.

In addressing dangerous chemicals before they enter the environment — whether as waste or in products — New Jersey's Pollution Prevention Act embodies one of INFORM's guiding principles, that avoiding the use of such substances in the first place is the best way to prevent potentially harmful exposures down the line. And despite the claim that the law imposes too great a financial burden on industry, many companies have found ways to increase efficiency in the process of devising their pollution prevention plans. In fact, the Department of Environmental Protection reports that New Jersey has realized a net economic gain of \$61.7 million per year since the law went into effect. What's more, INFORM's research suggests that toxic waste in the state has declined under the law, while nationwide it is on the rise. ❖

For a comparison of industrial releases of bioaccumulative toxins in the Great Lake states, where factories are required to report on waste quantities only, and in New Jersey, where they are required to report on both waste and use, see *Building Up to Danger: The Comparative Flow of Bioaccumulative Toxins from Factories in New Jersey and the Great Lakes Region* on INFORM's web site.

Four new publications will be available in print and on INFORM's web site by the end of the summer.


From the Sustainable Products and Practices program


 *Extended Producer Responsibility: A Materials Policy for the 21st Century*

Century addresses materials use and its environmental impacts worldwide; EPR policies and programs in the United States; e-commerce and its potential environmental impacts and implications for EPR; and the corporation's role in implementing EPR and related policies. Prepared on the occasion of Expo 2000, the international exposition being held in Hannover, Germany, from June 1 to October 31, the report's findings were presented by its authors — Bette Fishbein of INFORM, John Ehrenfeld of MIT, and John Young of the Materials Efficiency Project — at the Resources Summit conference in Berlin on May 18.




From the Sustainable Transportation program

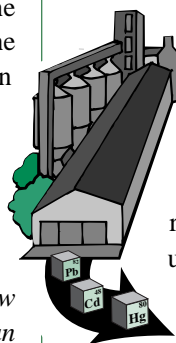
 *Green Transportation for New Jersey: Joining the Shift to Clean Fuels* provides the first overview of the Garden State's efforts to provide its eight million citizens with cleaner, healthier air through the use of alternative fuels and advanced-technology vehicles. It assesses the status of clean-fuel vehicles in the state, analyzes existing programs and policies, and presents a series of recommendations for making New Jersey a leader in the nation's shift to clean vehicle fuels.

 *Bus Futures: New Technologies for Cleaner Cities* looks at the

latest innovations in fuels and engine technology in the US bus industry and offers a side-by-side comparison of the commercial availability, performance, emissions benefits, safety, and costs of diesel buses versus natural gas buses. The status and emissions performance of newer technologies, such as hybrid electric-diesel buses, hybrid electric-natural gas buses, and fuel cell buses, are also discussed. Presents a snapshot of transit agency policies, perspectives, and bus purchase trends and the offerings of major bus manufacturers.

From the Chemical Hazards Prevention program

 *Building Up to Danger: The Comparative Flow of Bioaccumulative Toxins from Factories in New Jersey and the Great Lakes Region* examines industrial releases of bioaccumulative toxins (such as mercury, cadmium, and lead) in the eight states bordering the Great



Lakes, where factories are required to report on the amounts of these substances released as waste, and in New Jersey, where they are required to report on both waste and use. Its conclusion — that the vast majority of these substances are leaving factories in products rather than as waste — confirms the need for industrial plants to reduce their overall use of hazardous substances, not just emissions of waste at the end of the manufacturing process. Minimizing use is the most effective way to preempt health and environmental problems before widespread damage is done, such as occurred with leaded house paint and DDT.

INFORMing Others

Working for Clean Air Locally

Diesel Dies Hard

New York City's predominately minority community of East Harlem has the highest rate of childhood hospitalizations for asthma in the entire country. Yet an expanded depot planned for the area would house 130 diesel-fueled buses, whose fumes are known to significantly exacerbate the symptoms of this disease (see the lead story).

At a March hearing held by the City Council's Transportation Committee, INFORM joined the Natural Resources Defense Council and other environmental and community advocates in calling for New York City Transit to abandon its plans for the depot. "It is absolutely unconscionable," said INFORM president Joanna Underwood, "to propose worsening the community's air pollution conditions when an alternative to diesel buses is readily available." She pointed out that 31 public transit authorities throughout the United States have at least 20 percent of their buses fueled by com-



Victoria Betancourt, a 7-year-old East Harlem resident who suffers from asthma, spoke at the Transportation Committee's hearing on the 100th St. depot. Her mother, Dina Betancourt (center), and Chyi Sun, of INFORM's Sustainable Transportation Program, also testified.

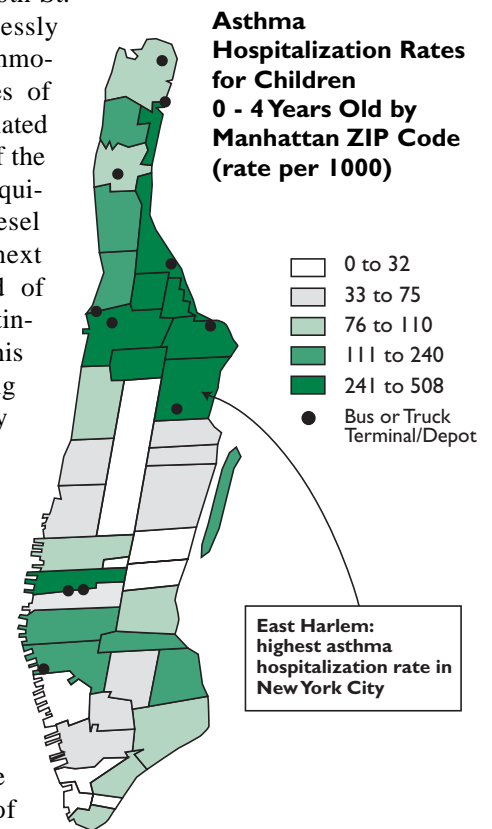


INFORM President Joanna Underwood and Philip Reed, New York City Council Member for the 8th District (East Harlem), at the press conference that followed the hearing.

pressed natural gas (CNG), while New York City Transit's fleet — the largest in the nation, with 4300 buses — is only 2 percent CNG.

The fact that East Harlem and the neighborhoods that surround it are at the very epicenter of this country's asthma epidemic is not surprising given the presence in these communities of eight of Manhattan's 11 diesel facilities (see map). If the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (NYCT's parent body) goes ahead with its plans for a new and enlarged depot, the area's diesel-related health problems will be compounded and perpetuated into the next generation. The 100th St.

depot is expressly intended to accommodate new purchases of 60-foot-long articulated diesel buses, part of the MTA's proposed acquisition of 756 diesel buses over the next five years. Instead of holding to its continued reliance on this extremely polluting fuel, the agency could join the national trend toward clean-fuel buses by revising its procurement decision and ordering more CNG buses for New York Transit now. This would have the added benefit of expediting the development of a refueling infrastructure in New York City, which, in turn, would facilitate the expanded use of CNG by other vehicle fleets.



For more information, see *Clean Transportation for New York: A Long Road Ahead* on INFORM's web site.

Working for Waste Prevention Locally

New York's Landfill-Free Future

As the last days of New York's Fresh Kills landfill draw near, INFORM is stepping up pressure on the city to reduce its waste burden through a comprehensive program of waste prevention. "By investing in prevention," said Senior Research Associate Alicia Culver in testimony this spring before the City Council's Committee on Environmental Protection, "the city can save taxpayers millions of dollars each year and get thousands of polluting garbage trucks off the streets."



A view of the Fresh Kills landfill on Staten Island.

INFORM's review of the Dept. of Sanitation's preliminary budget for fiscal 2001 reveals that the city is likely to spend twice — and possibly three times — as much to dispose of its trash in landfills and incinerators in other states than it has been spending to bury it at Fresh Kills (about \$142 million/year). "Already the Sanitation Department is asking the city to spend substantially more on trash disposal next year than it did this year," said Resa Dimino, outreach director for INFORM's New York City Waste Prevention Program. "By the time the landfill closes, the costs of export are expected to be well over \$300 million, which means important social services, schools, and cultural programs are likely to be competing with garbage disposal at budget time."

Given these economic realities, waste prevention is clearly the most cost-effective method of addressing the city's trash problem. To promote it, INFORM has submitted a list of budget items to the City Council, describing the potential of specific proposals — such as hiring waste prevention coordinators for the 59 community boards, expanding the city's composting program, and creating an environmental purchasing division within city government — to reduce both waste generation and the city's long-term disposal costs.

At the grassroots level, INFORM has teamed up with several local organizations, including the NYC Environmental Justice Alliance, the Organization of Waterfront Neighborhoods, and the Brooklyn Greens, to form the New York City Waste Prevention Coalition. The coalition is asking the city to devote 10 percent of its waste disposal budget to these and other waste prevention initiatives. INFORM and the coalition are also supporting legislation that would require city agencies to institute their own waste prevention programs — the first step toward mandatory waste prevention in New York City.

For more information on the New York City Waste Prevention Project, contact Alicia Culver at 361-2400, ext. 234 (culver@informinc.org), or Resa Dimino at ext. 232 (dimino@informinc.org).

INFORM PUBLICATIONS

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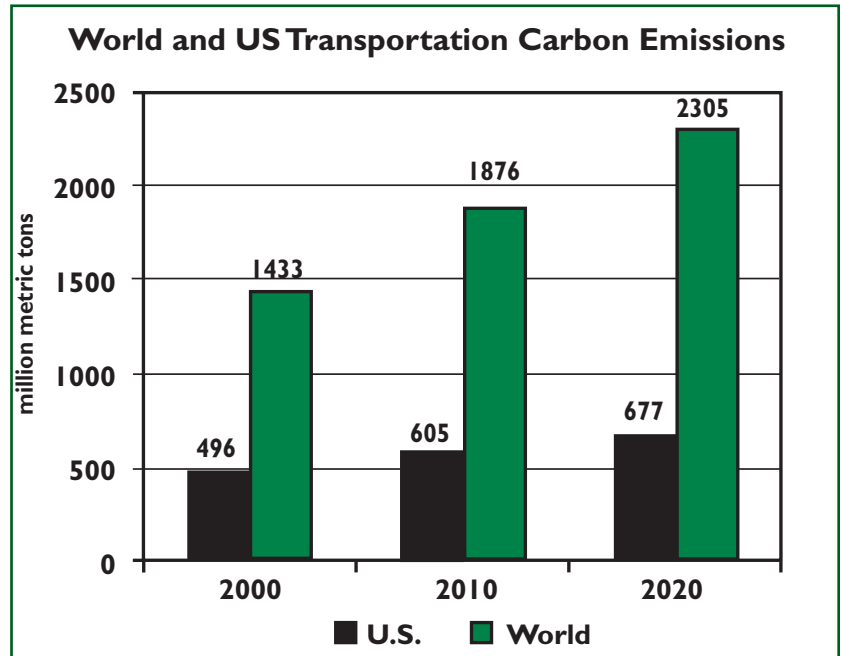
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INFORM: CO₂ from Transportation Keeps on Rising

Emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases are a key contributor to global climate change and a major threat to human health. The US generates 23.7 percent of the world's carbon dioxide emissions, of which transportation fuels account for more than 30 percent. Despite legislation to promote the use of cleaner alternatives to gasoline and diesel fuel in transportation, petroleum use and imports are steadily rising. In 1992, the US transportation sector consumed 139 billion gallons of gasoline and diesel; by 1998, its consumption of these fuels had increased by 10.8 percent, to 154 billion gallons. In the same period, the US population of alternative-fuel vehicles (AFVs) increased only marginally — from 251,362 to 385,358 — while the number of vehicles overall went from 190 million to 212 million. Meanwhile, US emissions of carbon dioxide from transportation increased by almost 10 percent, and are projected to reach almost 35 percent of the world's total in 2000 (see graph). In two new reports, INFORM zeroes in on the use of AFVs in New York and New Jersey — two states with some of the worst air quality in the nation — where AFVs continue to make up a woefully small fraction of vehicles overall.



INFORM reports

Strategies for a better environment

Spring 2000, Vol. 20, No. 1

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