



RELEASE: IMMEDIATE; September 16, 2003
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LANDMARK PROGRAM, FUNDING ANNOUNCED FOR AIR POLLUTION REDUCTION IN THE NEW YORK CITY REGION

A coalition of state, city, federal, educational and environmental organizations today announced the formation of a program to reduce private ferry emissions in New York Harbor. The program, the first in the nation, will be partially funded with a \$5 million Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant.

The project, called the New York Harbor Private Ferry Emissions Reduction Program, aims to cut pollution from the diesel-powered private vessels by identifying and implementing technologies that dramatically reduce harmful emissions. Private ferry traffic has doubled to 1,000 trips a day in New York Harbor since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, generating an increase in nitrogen oxide and other pollutants.

The use of private ferry service is projected to increase as redevelopment of lower Manhattan comes to fruition. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has nurtured this effort from its inception to ensure the redevelopment of lower Manhattan, including ferry service, takes place with minimal impact on the environment.

The \$6.8 million program will evaluate, demonstrate, and deploy emissions-reduction technologies to reduce emissions of NOx particulates and other pollutants from forty privately run ferry vessels operating in New York Harbor. The technology will cut between 150 and 300 tons of smog-inducing nitrogen oxide and between 30 and 90 tons of particulates each year.

Coalition partners include the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), the New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT), the FTA, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Rutgers - The State University of New Jersey, the University of Delaware, Environmental Defense, and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

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NYSERDA and NYCDOT will oversee and manage the project, which is being funded with \$1.8 million from NYCDOT's federal Congestion Mitigation Air Quality funds, and the \$5 million FTA grant. Seaworthy Systems inc. will be overseeing the technology evaluation and field demonstrations on the private ferry boats.

NYSERDA Chairman Vincent A. DeIorio said, "Supporting Governor Pataki's efforts to improve air quality, this program is striving to reduce harmful emissions emitted by these diesel engine ferries. The emissions program will significantly increase the quality of the air all New Yorkers breathe and I commend the valuable efforts of this strong partnership among the City, State and federal agencies involved."

"Through its Alternative Fuels Program, the NYCDOT aims to reduce emissions from motor vehicles and is now turning its attention to marine vessels," said NYCDOT Commissioner Iris Weinshall. "We're fortunate that the three major private ferry companies that operate in the Harbor -- New York Waterway, Seastreak and New York Water Taxi -- are willing to join us in this effort."

"Improving air quality is a priority of the Bush Administration and Secretary Mineta," said FTA Administrator Jennifer L. Dorn. "The Federal Transit Administration is pleased to provide funding to support this important effort in New York City, which will allow people to experience one of the most important benefits of public transportation."

"While upcoming EPA regulations will reduce emissions from new ferry engines, this retrofit program will help us breathe easier about the ferries we already have," said EPA Regional Administrator Jane M. Kenny. "We know that public transportation is the most environmentally sound way to get to work. Our partners in this remarkable effort have vowed to take mass transit to the next level -- to make ferries better for those who ride them and to improve air quality for everyone who lives and works in New York City."

"Today New York's diesel ferries are producing tons of carcinogenic pollution every day. Affordable technology and cleaner fuels can protect public health by cutting that pollution up to 90%," said Andy Darrell, Regional Director for Environmental Defense. "The ideas behind the Clean Ferry Initiative will bring New York harbor into the forefront of clean technology for the marine sector, setting a national precedent for making ferries part of the solution for clean air."

"The Rutgers-University of Delaware study will address pressing regional concerns -- environmental quality, transportation and the economy," said Martin E. Robins, director of the Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. "The continuing comeback of ferry service has been a boon to commuters, but comes with quality-of-life and economic issues. We are charged with recommending technologically feasible methods to reduce emissions that will encourage maximum participation by private ferry fleet owners and benefit the users of their service and those who live and work in the region."

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