

NYC Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS)
Testimony of City Chief Fleet Officer Keith Kerman
GHG Reduction Through Renewable Diesel
NYC Council Committee on Environmental Protection and Waterfronts
February 25, 2026

Good afternoon, Chair Gennaro, and members of the committee.

My name is Keith Kerman, and I am the deputy commissioner for Fleet Management at the New York City Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) and Chief Fleet Officer for the City of New York. I'm here with Sana Barakat, deputy commissioner at DCAS for Energy Management and the city's Chief Decarbonization Officer.

Thank you for this opportunity to illustrate the city's ongoing fleet sustainability efforts, including the utilization of renewable diesel, as well as comment on the proposed legislation to codify the use of biofuel. Additionally, I thank you for the continued partnership between this body and the city in furtherance of promoting a cleaner municipal fleet.

In 2015, the NYC Mayor's Office and DCAS rolled out the NYC Clean Fleet plan, whose goal was to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the city fleet by 50% within 10 years, which we refer to as 50 x 25. NYC Clean Fleet plan outlined three core strategies: electrify the fleet as quickly as possible; implement efficiencies aimed at further lowering carbon emissions - including through the use of hybrid vehicles -- and reducing the overall size of the fleet; and replace fossil diesel fuel with much cleaner biofuels. In the 10 years since the plan was introduced, DCAS has maintained focus and the fleet will achieve 50 by 25.

Today, the city operates the largest electric vehicle (EV) fleet in New York State, with 5,735 EVs, and another 410 units currently on order. DCAS also operates the largest EV charging network in the state with 2,424 charging ports currently in operation, including 415 fast chargers and 161 solar carports. We are installing more EV charging ports each month.

DCAS operates over 4,400 hybrid vehicles, and through our Fleet Office of Real Time Tracking (FORT), we have successfully decreased the size of the city's fleet by seven percent since fiscal year 2018. We have also implemented right-sizing measures including SUV reduction.

The city unequivocally seeks to achieve zero emissions for its fleet through electrification, in accordance with Local Law 140.

Until we can feasibly electrify all aspects of city fleet operations, for example snowplow trucks, DCAS has been implementing various biofuels, including biodiesel and renewable diesel. These two fuel types are **not** fossil fuels. Instead, they are produced from feedstocks, including waste animal fats, used cooking oil, soybean oil, and corn oil.

These fuels achieve substantial greenhouse gas reductions through the fuel production process. Biofuels can achieve reduced emissions of harmful chemicals like sulfur, carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxide, and particulate matter depending on blend and feedstock when compared to the combustion of fossil fuels, and a study could present an opportunity to better understand criteria pollutant emissions with biofuel and heating oil.

For many years, DCAS used blends of five to twenty percent biodiesel in fleet vehicles. DCAS sought to take the city's biofuel program further by substituting renewable diesel for the remaining fossil fuel. Renewable diesel is made from the same waste and renewable feedstocks as biodiesel but is manufactured to the same American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) standard specification as diesel fuel, and can be used in all trucks, off-road equipment, and underground storage tanks. DCAS uses renewable diesel in every make, model and year of its fleet equipment, emergency and non-emergency, on and off-road.

Most notably, renewable diesel is clear in color and has no foul, nauseating smell, whereas fossil fuels consist of hydrocarbons, also known as aromatics, such as benzene. In addition to their strong, unpleasant odor, these chemicals are carcinogenic. Through our use of renewable diesel, DCAS has reduced exposure to these dangerous chemicals, thus improving workplace health and safety for thousands of city drivers and mechanics, and our fellow New Yorkers as a whole. In 2018, DCAS implemented a one-million-gallon demonstration project for renewable diesel and worked with FDNY and the New York 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 U.S. to adopt the 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's fleet. The following year, DCAS completed the initiative. Today, over 95% of diesel fuel use for the fleet consists of biofuels, namely a blend of 95% renewable diesel and five percent biodiesel, and all city-owned fuel storage sites house only biofuel.

Additionally, DCAS has also worked to implement renewable diesel into the city's marine vessels. In October 2024, DCAS, DOT, and EDC announced plans to transition these vessels, including the Staten Island Ferry, to renewable diesel, and both DCAS and DOT collaborated to test over one million gallons in the ferries before jointly announcing last June that the system had fully transitioned to renewable diesel.

Presently, over 4.5 million gallons of renewable diesel have been used for the seven passenger ferries that DOT employs. In addition, DEP, NYPD, FDNY, and NYC Parks are all currently testing renewable diesel in their own vessels.

With respect to Intro 555, DCAS is generally supportive of this legislation, as the city has successfully utilized over 43 million gallons of renewable diesel for government operations, including to power us through the harsh winter weather we endured over the past month. For context, we have already implemented the equivalent of two complete years of fleet and ferry fuel use with renewable diesel. This is the largest renewable diesel program east of the Rocky Mountains in the United States.

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