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Mayor de Blasio and DEP Announce That All 5,300 Buildings Have Discontinued Use of Most Polluting Heating Oil, Leading to Significantly Cleaner Air

February 9, 2016

All registered buildings have converted from No. 6 heating oil to cleaner burning fuel resulting in an annual reduction of 1,200 tons of particulate matter emissions – preventing 210 premature deaths and 540 hospitalizations annually

Map of air quality improvements is available on [DEP's Flickr Page](#)

Building owners can find out how to convert from No. 4 heating oil by connecting with the City's [NYC Retrofit Accelerator](#) program

NEW YORK—Mayor Bill de Blasio and Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Emily Lloyd today announced that all 5,300 buildings that were registered as burning Number 6 heating oil in 2011 have converted to a cleaner fuel as of December 31, 2015 – a key step toward a healthier and more

sustainable New York City as the administration works toward its OneNYC goals of an 80 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and the cleanest air of any large U.S. city by 2030.

“Climate change is one of the greatest threats we face – and the most vulnerable New Yorkers are disproportionately impacted,” said **Mayor de Blasio**. “That’s why we’ve challenged ourselves to cut emissions 80 percent by the year 2050, and to achieve the cleanest air of any major U.S. city by 2030. Fully eliminating No. 6 heating oil – the most polluting heating oil – from our buildings is a vital step toward those goals, and we’ll continue to move toward renewables and away from fossil fuels.”

No. 6 oil contains the highest level of sulfur of all fuels commonly used for heating, and burning it emits sulfur dioxide and greater amounts of particulate matter and nitrogen oxide than cleaner fuels. Particulate matter can exacerbate cardiovascular and lung disease, and can even lead to premature death. Sulfur and nitrogen dioxide are respiratory irritants that exacerbate lung diseases like asthma, and nitrogen oxides contribute to ozone, another respiratory irritant, in downwind communities.

The conversion program began under the Bloomberg Administration and as all 5,300 buildings have now switched to a cleaner burning fuel, there has been a substantial reduction in air pollution, which models show will prevent 210 premature deaths and 540 hospitalizations each year/ Neighborhoods with the highest density of boiler conversions – such as northern Manhattan, northern Queens, and the South Bronx – saw the greatest improvement in air quality with the greatest proportion of health benefits occurring in vulnerable, high poverty areas. In addition, the heating oil conversions have reduced citywide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by an estimated 800,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent.

“The use of heavy heating oil was one of the most serious contributors to air pollution in New York City and, with significant input from a variety of stakeholders, we developed sensible regulations that helped 5,300 buildings switch to a cleaner fuel resulting in significantly healthier air for all New Yorkers,” said **DEP Commissioner Emily Lloyd**. “Under Mayor de Blasio’s leadership, New York City is delivering on our commitment to be a sustainable city and a leader in environmental stewardship.”

“We are delighted that our outreach program succeeded in getting building owners the information and strategies they needed to convert their boilers. Our Clean Heat program has also become a model for new energy outreach programs we are launching, such as the Retrofit Accelerator. No more will New Yorkers have to breathe in clouds of soot coming out of the tops of buildings. We win on cutting greenhouse gas emissions, and New Yorkers can breathe better too,” said **Nilda Mesa, Director of the Mayor’s Office of Sustainability**.

“Promoting a healthy and thriving New York City begins with the quality of the air that we breathe every day,” said **Health Commissioner Mary Bassett**. “The City’s action to move 5,300 buildings to a cleaner,

more sustainable fuel source will have remarkable consequences for the health of families now and in the future.”

“The end of Number 6 oil is fantastic news for New Yorkers,” said **Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer**. “As time passes we continue to learn how critical air quality is to public health. We have a moral obligation to make sure our kids grow up breathing cleaner air.”

“This achievement is enormously important, not only for our environment, but also for the health of all New Yorkers,” said **Council Member Corey Johnson, Chair of the New York City Council Committee on Health**. “As the most populous city in the nation, we need to set a high standard when it comes to building emissions. By eliminating No. 6 oil from our buildings, Mayor de Blasio and DEP are creating a cleaner city, and lives are being saved as a result. I thank them for their tireless efforts on this crucial issue.”

Council Member Costa Constantinides, Chair of the Council Environmental Protection Committee, said, “It is heartening to see that all buildings across our city no longer use No. 6 fuel oil, the dirtiest way to heat buildings. The conversion to cleaner fuel has reduced air pollution, which will prevent premature deaths and hospitalizations. I will continue to work to ensure that we take even bolder steps and move towards even cleaner fuel oil so that we can meet our goal of reducing our carbon emissions 80 percent by 2050. I thank DEP Commissioner Emily Lloyd for her leadership on this important issue.”

Marcia Bystryn, President of the New York League of Conservation Voters said: “Every New Yorker deserves to breathe clean air that is free of pollution. The end of No. 6 heating oil is a major milestone that will significantly improve air quality. We applaud the Mayor and DEP for their efforts to reduce emissions and create a greener, healthier city.”

“Environmental Defense Fund is proud to have partnered with Mayor Bill de Blasio and the Department of Environmental Protection on this initiative,” said **Abbey Brown, New York City Clean Energy Project Manager at EDF, a national environmental organization headquartered in New York City**. “The tremendous work by NYC Clean Heat and its partners has dramatically improved air quality and building efficiency citywide, and is being expanded through the NYC Retrofit Accelerator. By helping buildings switch off of No. 6 oil to cleaner fuels, NYC Clean Heat mobilized building owners and managers across the city, resulting in New York’s cleanest air since the early 1960s and serving as a model for cities worldwide.”

“On behalf of all New Yorkers who breathe our air, the American Lung Association commends Commissioner Lloyd, Mayor de Blasio, and the Department of Environmental Protection for seeing this important initiative through,” said **Jeff Seyler, President & CEO of the American Lung Association of**

the Northeast. “By eliminating the use of No. 6 heating oil, we will see major reductions of pollutants in our air leading to fewer hospitalizations and more lives saved.”

Ground-level air quality surveys taken by the New York City Department of Health in 2008-2009 showed that heavy heating oil was one of the most serious sources of local air pollution in New York City. DEP permits the use of large boilers in the city and almost all use either natural gas, No. 2, No. 4 or No. 6 oil as fuel. Working closely with environmental groups and the real estate industry, in 2011 DEP promulgated new rules which phased out the use of No. 6 heating oil by the end of 2015. Since then, DEP enforcement staff have conducted nearly 4,000 inspections, issued more than 2,000 Notices of Violation and 162 Cease and Desist Orders to ensure buildings were making the required conversion. In addition, the [NYC Clean Heat Program](#) helped more than 4,800 of these buildings convert off of No. 6 oil, and nearly 1,000 additional buildings convert off of No. 4 oil, by helping building owners understand their options, navigate the process of completing a conversion, and access financing and incentives to cover the costs. As of July 1, 2015, 96 percent of buildings had made the conversion from No. 6, and all were in compliance with the law by the end of the year.

Additional emission reductions have come from State rules that limited the sulfur content of No. 2 heating oil to 15 parts per million (a 99 percent reduction) and City rules restricting the sulfur content of No. 4 oil to 1,500 parts per million (a 50 percent reduction). DEP also now requires large building boilers to have annual tune-ups and combustion efficiency tests to ensure the boilers meet updated burning efficiency criteria. By increasing an existing boiler’s combustion efficiency from 80 to 83 percent, the New York State standard for new boilers, a building will use thousands of gallons less fuel every year and save tens of thousands of dollars in costs.

In addition, in 2015 Mayor de Blasio signed into law the most sweeping update to the City’s Air Pollution Control Code in 40 years. The revisions to the Code deleted outdated provisions and focused new standards on pollution sources that have had little or no emissions control requirements, including commercial char broilers, fireplaces, food trucks, and refrigeration vehicles. These sources, viewed as a whole, emit a significant amount of particulate matter. Mayor de Blasio also committed to accelerating the phase out of No. 4 heating oil with the release of [OneNYC](#) in April 2015. This is expected to accelerate additional air quality improvements and greenhouse gas reductions.

Building on the success of NYC Clean Heat and DEP’s heating oil regulations, in September 2015, the City launched the [NYC Retrofit Accelerator](#), a one-stop resource to help owners and operators of privately-owned buildings undertake a range of energy and water efficiency upgrades. The Retrofit Accelerator offers a team of efficiency advisors to provide independent, customized advisory services at no cost to building owners to identify energy and water upgrades and navigate the building retrofit process, including financing and incentive options. The Retrofit Accelerator continues the mission of the NYC Clean Heat program by helping building owners convert off of No. 4 heavy heating oil and is a key component of Mayor de Blasio’s commitment to reduce citywide GHG emissions by 80 percent by 2050

(80x50). The NYC Retrofit Accelerator is expected to reduce citywide GHG emissions by almost one million metric tons and save New Yorkers \$350 million in utility costs annually by 2025.

DEP manages New York City’s water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of water each day to more than nine million residents, including eight million in New York City. The water is delivered from a watershed that extends more than 125 miles from the city, comprising 19 reservoirs and three controlled lakes. Approximately 7,000 miles of water mains, tunnels and aqueducts bring water to homes and businesses throughout the five boroughs, and 7,500 miles of sewer lines and 96 pump stations take wastewater to 14 in-city treatment plants. In addition, DEP has a robust capital program, with a planned \$14 billion in investments over the next 10 years that will create up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. This capital program is responsible for critical projects like City Water Tunnel No. 3; the Staten Island Bluebelt program, an ecologically sound and cost-effective stormwater management system; the city’s Watershed Protection Program, which protects sensitive lands upstate near the city’s reservoirs in order to maintain their high water quality; and the installation of more than 820,000 Automated Meter Reading devices, which will allow customers to track their daily water use, more easily manage their accounts and be alerted to potential leaks on their properties. For more information, visit nyc.gov/dep, like us on Facebook at facebook.com/nycwater, or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/nycwater.

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