
The WIN, WIN, WIN, WIN of Alternative Cleaner Fuels

By: Keith T. Kerman

In our national discussion, there has been talk of the various approaches to cleaner and more sustainable fuels. NYC Fleet has over 25 years of practical experience and implementation of greener and cleaner fuel alternatives. Today, nearly 20,000 fleet units use some form of cleaner fuel alternative including natural gas, hybrids, biofuels, electric vehicles, and even solar-powered equipment units. In our fleet today, these alternatives are all in operation, working in tandem to achieve a cleaner and more reliable fleet.

On TV, policy options are inevitably posed as zero-sum games: pursue a policy and someone wins with it and someone loses. In truth, transforming our transportation fuels to cleaner alternatives can be a WIN, WIN, WIN, WIN for everyone, and not doing so will surely cost all of us dearly.

The first win: all parts of our country can benefit from the growth of the clean energy industry and the jobs that can be created. In NYC Fleet, our electric vehicles could be produced in Michigan or Pennsylvania, our biofuels made on farms in Iowa or NY, our solar equipment from Florida, or our electric chargers from California. NYC has had an extraordinary 15-year partnership with America's farmers developing the biofuels industry. In fact, our alternative fuel efforts began with natural gas vehicles in the mid-1990s.

In February 2020, Mayor de Blasio committed us to an all-electric fleet by 2040. And, no doubt, all-electric, zero-emissions are the ideal path, preferably sourced through solar power. We have almost 3,000 plug-in units now, NY's largest charging network at 1,000 units plus and growing, and the nation's largest portable solar carport network.

That said, we have extensive existing fleet and infrastructure that still relies on liquid fuels or natural gas and will for a while. All these cleaner approaches listed here will be with us for years to come and are better than the pollution and emissions from fossil fuels.

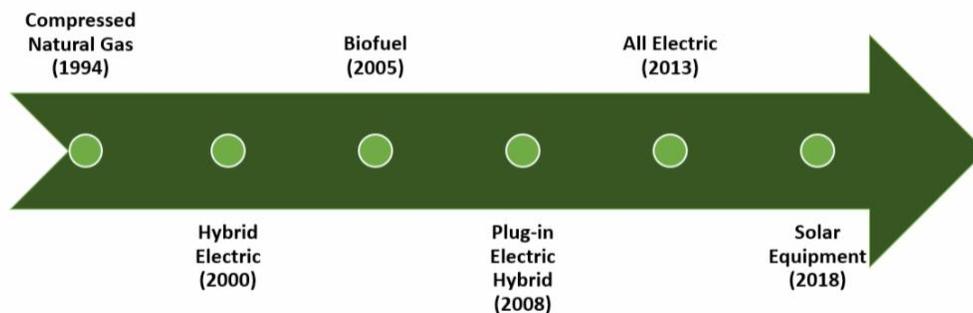
The second win: cleaner air and reduced greenhouse gas emissions. We all breathe the same air. We are all subject to asthma, heart, and lung exposure. No one is against clear air and no one in their right mind pretends fossil fuels are clean. If someone argues that point, ask them to join you to watch what comes out of a truck tailpipe when the engine is running. All these cleaner alternatives will improve our daily lives and protect our future against climate change from which none of us can escape. California is on fire, Louisiana is flooding, and all of us are facing the threat of COVID-19. These are all natural threats. In just a short window of time in NY, we went from "hurricanes really don't happen here" to "I hope we don't get another this year."

The third win: one not discussed as often. Alternative fuels can save you money if you invest in them. We know that electric vehicles greatly reduce both energy and maintenance costs. NYC Fleet produced a [report](#) showing electric vehicles can be as much as 70% less costly to maintain. We know that hybrids reduce costs and maintenance as well. Biofuels are usually less expensive than fossil fuels in the marketplace and are subject to tax incentives passed with bipartisan support. Natural gas units can also be less expensive and lower maintenance. Without a doubt, there is startup time in developing these alternatives. Our electric vehicles and hybrids of today are much less expensive and more reliable than the first models. That said, the future is one where we can have a cleaner environment and get money back! For NYC Fleet, many of our alternative fuel projects are tied to OMB savings initiatives.

The fourth and final win: people will like these alternatives better when they get to know them. In the United States, there is no doubt a strong, hard to break connection to the personal vehicle. We can debate the future on that. However, there is no such nostalgia for the gas station experience. Plugging in is a lot more pleasant than fueling up. If someone tells you electric vehicles are not strong or high performing vehicles, they have likely never driven one. There is a reason that the top-rated luxury vehicle in the world is an electric car. Get in an electric car, hit the accelerator, and soon you will be searching the term “instant torque.” Few consumers place extra breakdowns, idle pollution, and high engine noise on their shopping lists. The alternative fuel vehicles of tomorrow are in the marketplace today. NYC already gets over **100 MPG** on average for its new vehicles. This is as much about education as it is about technology development.

NYC Fleet and DCAS will continue to lead in bringing a low emissions and more reliable fleet to NYC and showing the way this can be done for all fleets in our country. Cleaner air, lower maintenance, more reliable vehicles, and partnership with all parts of our state and nation are the continuing fruits of this 25-year effort. Learn more about our clean fuels program [here](#).

NYC Fleet Alternative Fuels Timeline



Of course, policy determines how we move forward. With that said, we remind everyone to VOTE this coming election day or sooner if you can. Hoping for all our sakes for a peaceful and happy Election Day!

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