



NEWS From
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Alessi unveils a plan to help reduce New York's dependence on foreign oil

Would promote the widespread use of biodiesel fuel, from farming equipment to school buses to home heating oil; goal of 20 percent biodiesel by 2011

Assemblyman Marc S. Alessi (D – Wading River) announced today he is introducing a series of measures that would increase New York State's consumption of biodiesel fuel. The four bill legislative package would make the state's fleet of vehicles and local school buses biodiesel-ready; as well as encourage the use of biodiesel among farmers and in heating New Yorker's homes.

"Biodiesel is vastly superior to petroleum in so many ways; so superior, that we would be doing our environment and our children a gross disservice if we do not fully utilize the potential that lies within this energy source," said Alessi. "Using more biodiesel means we are lessening our dependence on oil from unstable parts of the world. By working to reduce fossil fuel emissions, it also means we are doing something beyond providing lip service to the global warming crisis. Further, we can create jobs as we would be producing the fuel right here at home."

Biodiesel fuel is derived from organic sources, commonly in the form of agricultural plant oils or animal fats. Scientific studies have shown that utilizing neat biodiesel fuel (100% organic) can reduce fossil fuel emissions upwards of 75 percent. Using a 20 percent biodiesel blend (B-20) – presently more realistic for widespread use – can reduce emissions 15 percent.

Included in Alessi's package is a measure that would require all bus owners to replace or retrofit their diesel operated vehicles so that they are capable of using a blend of biodiesel fuel (A8732). Upon this legislation being enacted into law, school buses would have to be bio-capable within two years and all other buses must be fitted within four years. So that this would not become an unfunded mandate on local districts, Alessi's legislation would establish a school bus grant program to be administered by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA).

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Following the lead of Suffolk County, Alessi will also put forth a measure that would require the state's fleet of diesel operated vehicles to be replaced or retrofitted to operate on B-20 fuel by 2011. Last year, under the leadership of County Executive Steve Levy, Suffolk County commenced an initiative to make 25 percent of the county's fleet capable of using B-20 biodiesel fuel.

Another measure Alessi will be introducing would provide a sales tax credit for farmers who purchase biodiesel fuel to operate farm equipment. The credit would be one cent for every percent of biodiesel used, upwards of 25 cents. Therefore, using a B-20 biodiesel blend would save farmers 20 cents per gallon.

With home energy prices continuing to overwhelm Long Islanders, Alessi will also introduce legislation that would reduce consumption of petroleum-based oil by mandating that home heating oil contain 20 percent biodiesel fuel by 2011.

“Our recently released State of the Air Report showed us that too many New Yorkers are being exposed to unhealthy air. The combustion of sulfur-laden home heating oil contributes significantly to the high ambient concentrations of ozone and fine particles found in New York State,” said **Michael Seilback, Senior Director of Public Policy & Advocacy** for the **American Lung Association of New York State, Inc.** “We applaud Assemblyman Alessi for tackling the issue of home heating fuel and urge the Assembly to pass this bill, so that New Yorkers could all breathe a little easier.”

“Biodiesel is a homegrown solution to New York State's heavy pollution and rising oil costs,” said **Jason K. Babbie, Senior Environmental Policy Analyst** of the **New York Public Interest Research Group**. “The use of biodiesel, particularly to replace home heating oil, means less pollution causing global warming, heart attacks and respiratory problems, all while decreasing our dependence on fossil fuels here and abroad. These bills should also provide consumer relief on the rising cost of home heating oil, which after adjusting for inflation has increased about 52% since 2002. NYPIRG commends Assemblyman Alessi for advancing biodiesel and encourage the legislature to pass these bills this session.”

“The environmental advantages of biodiesel, alone, warrant its increased use. Further, as the cost of gasoline continues to escalate, we hear more and more that American's demand for oil is largely to blame,” said Alessi. “The simple fact is: if we reduce our consumption of traditional, outdated fuel sources, we'll start seeing a difference at the pump. Making biodiesel more mainstream in New York would cleanse us of this addiction and work to lower the cost of filling up our gas tanks.”