



## Reporting Period: 1/1/2023—12/31/2023

### I. Project Summary

In January 2023, Empire Clean Cities (ECC) commenced its third year working on the year-long educational and outreach campaign "Soy in the City: Connecting Sustainable Farms and Bio-based Fuels in New York," a year-long education and outreach campaign. The primary goals of the Soy in the City campaign included highlighting corn and soy production in New York State by upstate farmers; highlighting to downstate biofuel users and fleets that New York State agriculture plays a significant role in our clean energy ecosystem; and advocating for the continued use of biofuels as a way to fight climate change and decrease air pollution from diesel particulate matter, especially in New York City, where many neighborhoods are overburdened by exhaust pollution from diesel-powered vehicles.

As part of our proposal, ECC committed to developing an outreach and education campaign about U.S.-produced biofuels and New York-produced biofuel feedstock, with a direct and detailed focus on farmers in upstate New York who produce agricultural products that are used in biofuel production. In support of the campaign, [ECC continued updating a dedicated webpage for the project](#), consistently shared resources on our social media accounts and in our newsletter about biodiesel and biofuels, and conducted outreach to fleets in the Hudson Valley and New York City area about the benefits and availability of biodiesel and other bio-based products. In December, we hosted a successful webinar titled "Reducing Emissions Through Renewable Diesel" to highlight the biodiesel, renewable diesel, and other bio-based products that can help fleets curb their emissions and save on operating costs.

ECC is pleased to present our final Progress of Work report for the entire project period of January to December 2023.

### II. Work Summary To-date

#### *Phase I: January to March*

In the first phase of our renewed 2023 outreach campaign, ECC created engaging social media and newsletter content for our readership. These pieces focused on reinforcing our audience's basic biodiesel knowledge, as well as sharing information about the state of the New York and national biodiesel markets. ECC has continued its outreach activities on social media, such as Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. ECC's bi-weekly newsletter is a wide-spread and effective

form of outreach communication, with a series of articles and other announcements in the biofuel space featured.

ECC has incorporated biodiesel into its outreach and advocacy efforts this quarter. In February, ECC staff attended Transportation Energy Partners' Energy Independence Summit in Washington D.C., where we held in-person meetings with more than a dozen of our New York congressional and senatorial staffers at their Capitol offices; while there, we discussed their support of the national Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS). With assistance from New York's other Clean Cities Coalitions, we were able to raise awareness of our local biofuel economies with both upstate and New York City representatives.

During this first period, ECC also began planning for its 14th Annual Stakeholder Meeting, held in concert with NYC DCAS's Vehicle and Equipment Show in Queens, NY. NYC DCAS—whose fleet operations use more blended biodiesel gallons than any other municipal fleet in the U.S.—this year hosted their 33rd Annual Vehicle and Equipment Show. ECC plans to host speakers and a panel focused on biofuels and bio-based products at this year's Stakeholder Meeting, which we anticipate will draw over 200 attendees.

#### *Phase II: April to June*

In the second phase of our renewed 2023 outreach initiative, ECC continued to craft engaging content for our audience on social media and in newsletters. This content was designed to reinforce our readership's fundamental knowledge of biodiesel and to share information about the biodiesel markets in both New York and across the nation. ECC actively carried out outreach activities on popular social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. The bi-weekly newsletter from ECC remained a widely embraced and effective form of communication, featuring a variety of articles and announcements related to the biofuel industry.

During this period, ECC held its 14th Annual Stakeholder Meeting, held in concert with NYC DCAS's Vehicle and Equipment Show in Queens, NY. NYC DCAS—whose fleet operations use more blended biodiesel gallons than any other municipal fleet in the U.S.—this year hosted their 33rd Annual Vehicle and Equipment Show. ECC hosted speakers and a panel focused on biofuels and bio-based products at this year's Stakeholder Meeting, which drew over 160 attendees.

#### *Phase III: July to September*



In the third phase of our renewed 2023 education and outreach campaign, ECC continued to create engaging social media and newsletter content for our readership. These pieces focused on reinforcing our audience’s basic biodiesel knowledge, as well as sharing information about the state of the New York and national biodiesel markets. ECC has continued its outreach activities on social media, such as Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter. ECC’s bi-weekly newsletter is a wide-spread and effective form of outreach communication, with a series of articles and other announcements in the biofuel space featured.

*Phase IV: October to December*

In the final phase of our renewed 2023 education and outreach campaign, ECC continued to create engaging social media and newsletter content for our readership. ECC held a webinar on December 20th, 2023 titled “Reducing Emissions Through Renewable Diesel” via Zoom. The webinar gave a broad overview of all of the bio-based fuel options available to fleets, as well as options that are likely to become available in the near future. The webinar focused heavily on bio-based products including biodiesel, renewable diesel, ethanol, bio-based tires, and more, with detailed instructions on how fleets could request higher blends of biodiesel from their suppliers and find access to biodiesel at public pumps.

Representatives from over a dozen different fleets were in attendance for the webinar, and ECC received several followup emails from fleets seeking more information about alternative fuels. The [webinar recording is available for view](#) on our website, and the recording was shared with registered attendees and through our newsletter distribution list.

**Deliverables Completion**

<b>Goals</b>	
1a) Promote biodiesel and bio-based products New York events, including at a NYC Department of Transportation Public Space Programming event and at the annual Empire Clean Vehicle Festival, each featuring a vehicle that runs on biodiesel.	<i>100% Complete</i>
1b) Continue social media campaigns directly related to supporting corn and soybean growers, highlighting the connection between agriculture and fuel.	<i>100% Complete</i>
1c) Publish articles in the ECC and fellow Clean Cities Coalition’s Newsletter.	<i>100% Complete</i>
2a) Maintain and update current “Soy in the City” project page with links to biodiesel resources, social media pages, and the NYCSGA.	<i>100% Complete</i>

2b) Use ECC’s website to promote soybean production as vehicle fuel, as well as educational resources on soy and corn production in New York.	100% Complete
3a) Host a webinar for fleets on the benefits of biodiesel, including participation from current biodiesel end user fleets in NYC, as well as New York soybean farmers, where possible.	100% Complete
3b) Meet with individual fleet operators to discuss the benefits and logistics of the transition to biodiesel and bio-based products.	100% Complete

### III. Deliverable Completion Metrics

#### A. Newsletters (see attachment A for additional details)

- January 3rd
  - a) Shared a report from *Biodiesel Magazine* titled “USDA: US biodiesel exports at 65,979 metric tons in October”
  - b) Shared event details for the upcoming Clean Fuels Alliance Conference
- February 1st
  - a) Shared our experiences of attending the 20243 Clean Fuels Alliance Conference, where Clean Cities Coalitions received the Impact Award for their decades of work promoting biofuels and bio-based products
  - b) Shared an article from *FuelsFix* titled “Understanding the Difference Between Biodiesel and Renewable Diesel”
- February 14th
  - a) Shared news of NREL’s launch of a new synthetic biology project to advance biofuel discovery
- February 28th
  - a) Shared an updated map of U.S. biodiesel plants from USDA
- April 11th
  - a) Shared the link to a Clean Fuels America podcast episode featuring ECC staff
- June 20th
  - a) Shared United Soybean Board’s Podcast Series: Clean Conversations
- July 4th
  - a) Shared news article about EPA renewable fuel standards

- July 4th
  - a) Shared news article about EPA finalizing renewable fuel standards under the Renewable Fuel Standard requirement, showcasing federal support of low-carbon fuels and agricultural communities. We highlighted the importance of biofuels as a low-carbon fuel to our newsletter audience.
- August 15
  - a) Shared the "Report: Global Market for Biofuels 2022-2023," to bring awareness to our newsletter audience on the state of the biofuels market to support corn and soybean growers, highlighting the connection between food and fuel
- September 13th
  - a) Shared an article from *Forbes* about the updated biofuel blending mandates
  - b) Shared USDA Biofuel Infrastructure Grants Application instructions and materials
- September 27th
  - a) Shared article about the EPA finalizing higher blend rule for ethanol
  - b) Shared USDA Biofuel Infrastructure Grants Application instructions and materials
- October 10th
  - a) Shared an article titled "Biodiesel Specialist shares five steps to better cold weather fuel performance"
- October 24th
  - a) Shared NREL's "Biodiesel Handling And Use Guide"
- December 19
  - a) Shared Webinar details

In total, ECC shared 34 biofuel, biodiesel, and other bio-based fuel-related articles, events, and reports in its biweekly newsletter from February 2021 to January 2022.

#### **B. Social media (see attachment B for additional details)**

ECC posted educational content to our social media accounts as part of the "Soy in the City" campaign, using the hashtag #SoyintheCity and tagging NYCSGA when applicable.

In 2023, ECC's posts reached a very high number of people. Our Instagram page's reach was just short of 20,000, while our Facebook page's reach was over 30,000.

During the entirety of the Soy in the City campaign, ECC posted the following numbers of posts across its social media channels:

- Facebook (10 posts)
- Twitter (9 posts)
- Instagram (10 posts)

As mentioned above, our biodiesel-focused posts tended to garner the most engagement across all platforms.

### **C. Events and Outreach Activities**

#### *Phase I: January to March*

ECC's executive director Joy Gardner took to the airwaves on an episode of Clean Fuels Alliance America: Fueling Conversations podcast to discuss the immediate role that clean fuels can play in addressing environmental concerns and the impacts biodiesel and renewable diesel can make. The episode discussed the immediate role clean fuels play in quickly reducing emissions from New York's transportation sector. We look forward to more innovative opportunities to discuss the benefits of biofuels and bio-based products as the year progresses.

ECC staff also attended the Clean Fuels Alliance America Conference in Tampa, Florida, where the Clean Cities Coalition network was honored for their decades of education and outreach work around biofuels and bio-based products.

#### *Phase II: April to June*

In May 2023, ECC held its 14th Annual Stakeholder Meeting, where biofuels and bio-based products were featured heavily. One of the highlight presentations during the meeting was led by Belinda Burkner, the esteemed Director from the United Soybean Board. Belinda oversees the Soy Checkoff that has invested in biodiesel, as well as partnerships with Goodyear for soy tires, concrete durability enhancers, asphalt and other soy-based products that can contribute to the Port's sustainability success. Her presentation, "Beyond Fuel Type: Using Bio-Based Products to Reduce More Emissions," signaled a shift in focus towards the diverse applications of bio-based resources, with special attention to soy-based biofuels.

Later, in June, representatives from ECC's biodiesel- and biofuel-focused stakeholders attended ECC's gala cruise celebrating 30 years of the DOE Clean Cities program along with New Jersey Clean Cities and the NAFA, which was celebrating 65 years of its New York chapter.

### *Phase III: July to September*

While no biofuel-focused events were hosted in this phase of the project, ECC spent Q3 planning a number of events for Winter 2023 to present biodiesel as an alternative fuel to NYC fleets and businesses, virtually with statewide and local partners.

### *Phase IV: October to December*

ECC held a webinar on December 20th, 2023 titled "Reducing Emissions Through Renewable Diesel" via Zoom. The webinar gave a broad overview of all of the bio-based fuel options available to fleets, as well as options that are likely to become available in the near future. The webinar focused heavily on bio-based products including biodiesel, renewable diesel, ethanol, bio-based tires, and more, with detailed instructions on how fleets could request higher blends of biodiesel from their suppliers and find access to biodiesel at public pumps.

Representatives from over a dozen different fleets were in attendance for the webinar, and ECC received several followup emails from fleets seeking more information about alternative fuels. The [webinar recording is available for view](#) on our website, and the recording was shared with registered attendees and through our newsletter distribution list. Following the event, ECC had discussions with two fleets—a newspaper delivery company and a local university—to discuss their options for transitioning both fleets to a bio-based blend in 2023.

## **IV. Summary of Work**

ECC's 2023 Soy in the City Campaign began in January 2023 with three explicit goals: to 1) increase awareness about the role that biodiesel and bio-based products play in reducing emissions from transportation in the region, 2) increase visibility and support for the producers of those products, and 3) reduce air pollution by providing technical assistance for fleets to help them transition to clean, renewable biodiesel and soy-based products.

While ECC was very successful in disseminating biofuel and biodiesel knowledge, our goal of connecting with soy and corn farmers in upstate New York proved difficult. However, we did our best to communicate to our fleet stakeholders of New York's regional importance as a producer of soybeans and other feedstocks for biodiesel and other biofuels. Our strategies of providing venues to discuss the benefits of biofuels and other bio-based products directly with end users presented some of our best opportunities yet to showcase the role of upstate New York farmers in combating air pollution downstate. Biofuels featured prominently in our event planning and



outreach materials. Moving into 2024, ECC will continue to promote biodiesel as a sustainable, domestically produced vehicle fuel on our social media and newsletter channels.