**Reporting Period: 2/1/2021—1/30/2022**

# **Project Summary**

Starting in January of 2021, Empire Clean Cities (ECC) commenced “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; providing meaningful connections between the biodiesel used in NYC’s fleets and the upstate farmers who produce the feedstock that can be used to produce biofuels; and advocating for the continued use of biofuels as a way to fight climate change and decrease air pollution from diesel particulate matter.

As part of our proposal, ECC committed to developing an outreach and education campaign about U.S.-produced biofuels, with a direct and detailed focus on farmers in upstate New York who produce biofuels’ soy and corn feedstocks. In support of the campaign, [ECC created a dedicated webpage for the project](https://www.empirecleancities.org/soyinthecity.html), consistently shared resources on our social media accounts and in our newsletter about biodiesel and biofuels, and conducted outreach to NYS farmers to conduct interviews and promote individual spotlights. We highlighted one farm operation in July and a second in November. In December, we hosted a successful webinar titled “From the Farm to Your Fuel Tank: The Benefits of Biodiesel and Renewable Diesel” to highlight the biodiesel, renewable diesel, and other bio-based products that can help fleets curb their emissions and save money.

ECC is pleased to present our final Progress of Work report for the entire project period of February 2021 to January 2022.

# **Work Summary To-date**

*Phase I: February to April*

In the first phase of our “Soy in the City” outreach campaign, ECC worked on establishing relationships with New York farmers, creating interesting and relevant content about biofuel production and use, and creating a platform for citizens and stakeholders to access available resources and connection to farmers. 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 reached out to farmers and biodiesel organizations in order to connect with individuals for the interview and spotlight portion of the campaign. ECC has developed a series of guiding questions for the virtual (Zoom or phone) interviews and is on track to network with more farmers into the spring and summer months.

*Phase II: May to July*

In the second phase of our “Soy in the City” outreach campaign, ECC worked on conducting our first interview with a farm stakeholder, creating interesting content about biofuel use, and sharing relevant information with stakeholders and fleets. 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 completed a Farmer Spotlight, which was featured on social media, in ECC’s newsletter, and is now hosted on the dedicated campaign webpage, empirecleancities.org/soyinthecity. We are continuing outreach to farmers and fleets for the next in our interview series.

*Phase III: August to October*

In the third phase of our “Soy in the City” outreach campaign, ECC continued to make efforts to establish relationships with upstate farmers and downstate biofuel users, creating a platform for citizens and stakeholders to access available resources and connection to farmers. ECC has continued its outreach activities on social media, such as Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. In ECC’s bi-weekly newsletter, we are able to disseminate information about advancements in biodiesel in articles and other announcements. Our newsletter readership hovers around one thousand subscribers, making it second only to large events in its effectiveness in conveying information regarding biodiesel and biofuels.

ECC has reached out to farmers and biodiesel organizations in order to connect with individuals for the interview and spotlight portion of the campaign. ECC has developed a series of guiding questions for the virtual (Zoom or phone) interviews and is aiming to conduct more stakeholder interviews before the end of 2021.

*Phase IV: November to January*

In the final phase of our “Soy in the City” outreach campaign, ECC continued to make efforts to establish relationships with upstate farmers and communicate the importance of their products to downstate biofuel users. We continually updated our platforms, including our website and social media accounts, for citizens and stakeholders to access biofuel and biodiesel resources and connections to farmers. ECC continued its outreach activities on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter to build biofuel knowledge and promote biofuel-focused events. In ECC’s bi-weekly newsletter, we disseminated information about advancements in biodiesel, biofuel news, biofuel events, and other announcements. Our newsletter readership hovers around one thousand subscribers, making it second only to large events in its effectiveness in conveying information regarding biodiesel and biofuels. Over the entirety of the 2021 “Soy in the City” campaign, we estimate that we had upwards of thirty thousand unique interactions on social media with our biofuel-focused posts.

ECC reached out to farmers and biodiesel organizations in order to connect with individuals for the interview and spotlight portion of the campaign. Using the guiding questions for the virtual (Zoom or phone) interviews**,** we were able to feature some farmers and biodiesel organizations. However, this aspect of our outreach was less successful than hoped, as farmers were difficult to connect with—over the course of 2021, we were only able to connect with two upstate farmers and feature their stories on our website, social media, and newsletters.

We were able to speak generally and one-on-one with New York City and Lower Hudson Valley fleets about the benefits of biodiesel. Meetings with fleets were held virtually over Zoom, while a further handful of fleets also attended our “Benefits of Biodiesel” Webinar in December.

**Deliverables Completion**

| **Goals** |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1a) Launch an online social media campaign directly related to corn and soybean growers and drawing the connection between food and fuel, geared towards a public audience. | *100% Complete* |
|
| 1b) Publish articles in the ECC and fellow Clean Cities Coalition’s Newsletter. | *100% Complete* |
|
| 1c) Interview NYS corn and soybean farmers to discuss their operations, insight as farmers, and their role in improving air quality for New Yorkers. | *100% Complete* |
|
| 1d) Interview fuel end-users of bio-based fuels in New York, such as public and private vehicle fleets and restaurant and food trucks. | *100% Complete* |
| 2a) Create a “Soy in the City” project page with links to biodiesel resources, individual farm/farmer websites (with their permission), social media pages, and NYCSGA website. | *100% Complete* |
| 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 soybean farmers. | *100% Complete* |
|
|
| 3b) Build opportunities for NYCSGA farmers to speak at or attend Empire Clean Cities’ annual events, such as our Annual Stakeholder Meeting and Empire Clean Vehicle Festival. | *100% Complete* |
| 3c) Meet with individual fleet operators to discuss the transition to biodiesel and bio-based products. | *100% Complete* |

# **Deliverable Completion Metrics**

* 1. **Newsletters (see attachment for additional details)**
     + January 12th:
       1. Event shared, 2021 National Biodiesel Conference & Expo
     + January 26th:
       1. Article shared titled “Boeing says its fleet will be able to fly on 100% biofuel by 2030”
     + February 17th:
       1. Article shared titled “US EPA to release update on biofuel blending waivers”
     + February 23rd:
       1. Video shared titled “Making Biodiesel: How U.S. Soybeans Become America’s Advanced Biofuel”
     + March 9th:
       1. Article shared titled “Race for the superfuel”
     + May 4th:
       1. Funding opportunity shared: US DOE Biofuels Research
     + May 18th:
       1. Event share: Grants and Funding to Facilitate the Transition to Cleaner and More Efficient Truck Technology
       2. Article shared: “The Solid Biofuel Market Grows Steadily Despite the Pandemic”
     + June 1st:
       1. Event shared: Funding Incentives to Fuel Clean Truck Technologies and Infrastructure
       2. Article shared: “Argonne study finds 23% reduction decrease in carbon intensity of ethanol from 2005 to 2019”
     + June 29th:
       1. Article shared: “Getting the most out of methane reduction”
     + July 13th:
       1. Article shared: “Statement by Energy Vision in Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council”
       2. Article shared: “Want to End Flying Shame? Meet Sustainable Jet Fuel”
     + July 27th:
       1. ECC Announcement: “Introducing Soy in the City, Biodiesel Education Campaign”
       2. Article shared: “$1.5M DOE grant targets cyanobacteria for biofuel production"
     + August 10th:
       1. Shared article titled "U.S. renewable diesel capacity could increase due to announced and developing projects" from the Energy Information Administration’s Today in Energy reader
       2. Shared invitation for downstate fleet operators who use biofuels to share their biofuel story
     + August 24th:
       1. Shared article titled “USDA awards $26 million for higher-blend biofuel infrastructure” from *SuccessfulFarming* Magazine
       2. Re-shared invitation for downstate fleet operators who use biofuels to share their biofuel story
     + September 8th:
       1. Shared op-ed article from the National Biodiesel Board in *ACTNews* titled “NBB: Now is the Time to Cut Carbon with Biodiesel, Renewable Diesel”
     + October 12th:
       1. Shared copy of NYC DCAS’s newsletter with announcement of B50 test pilot with NYC Parks, plus a summary of NYC government use of biofuels from FY13 to FY2021
     + October 26th:
       1. Shared event details for upcoming 2022 National Biodiesel Conference and Expo in Las Vegas, NV
       2. Shared article entitled “Euronav Successfully Tests Biodiesel Blend on Suezmax Tanker” from *The Maritime Executive*
     + November 9th:
       1. Shared article titled "Democratic climate package could expand biofuels, spur methane capture" from *Agri-Pulse* about the biofuel stipulations of the Build Back Better plan
       2. Shared details of upcoming “All In: National Biodiesel Conference and Expo in Las Vegas, NV” in January 2022
     + November 23rd:
       1. Shared our “Soy in the City: Farmer Focus” spotlight on Ralph Lott and Son Farm
       2. Announced and shared registration information for our “Benefits of Biodiesel” webinar
       3. Shared details of upcoming “All In: National Biodiesel Conference and Expo in Las Vegas, NV” in January 2022
     + December 7th:
       1. Shared registration information for our “Benefits of Biodiesel” webinar
       2. Shared details of upcoming “All In: National Biodiesel Conference and Expo in Las Vegas, NV” in January 2022
     + December 21st:
       1. Shared details of upcoming “All In: National Biodiesel Conference and Expo in Las Vegas, NV” in January 2022
       2. Shared update from the U.S. EPA titled “EPA Proposes Comprehensive Set of Biofuels Program Updates and Improvements”
     + January 4th:
       1. Shared event details for upcoming 2022 National Biodiesel Conference and Expo in Las Vegas, NV
       2. Shared details of upcoming “All In: National Biodiesel Conference and Expo in Las Vegas, NV” in January 2022

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.

* 1. **Social media (see attachment A 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 the final quarter of 2021, ECC made a more concerted effort to feature biodiesel and biofuels in our social media content. More than twenty social media posts were made across our various social media platforms from November to January, including news articles, promotion of biofuel-focused events, and more.

* + - Facebook (8 posts)
    - Twitter (8 posts)
    - Instagram (8 posts)

From February 2021 to January 2022, ECC’s posts reached a very high number of people. Our Instagram page’s reach was just short of 24,000, while our Facebook page’s reach was over 36,000. Our posts with the most unique engagement and interactions were our paid promoted biofuel- and biodiesel-focused posts and event promotions later in 2021.

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

* + - Facebook (19 posts)
    - Twitter (20 posts)
    - Instagram (19 posts)

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

* 1. **Events**

*Phase I: February to April*

ECC planned a number of events for Spring 2021 to include biodiesel as an alternative fuel to NYC fleets and businesses, both virtually and in-person as COVID-19 guidelines changed rapidly. In addition to an April 2021 webinar with New York City Department of Transportation's (NYC DOT) Freight Mobility Unit, ECC planned two additional webinars in this series. The goal of the webinars with NYC DOT is to reach NYC fleets and business owners with reliable information about alternative fuel options, such as biodiesel, into their operations. It was in ECC’s proposal to invite a farmer or biodiesel representative to an event in 2021.

*Phase II: May to July*

ECC spent the summer planning two of its annual events for the late-summer and fall of 2021, held in-person in September and October. The September event was ECC’s Annual Stakeholder Meeting, held in conjunction with NYC Parks Fleet and Equipment Show. ECC held a morning informational session before the larger networking event—including biodiesel and biofuels in the topic line-up. Biodiesel stakeholders were invited to attend and participate. The October event was our annual Empire Clean Vehicle Festival, which regularly attracts hundreds of passersby and dozens vehicle showcases from public and private fleets. ECC invited multiple fleets using biodiesel to showcase their vehicles at the event. ECC also distributed information to the public concerning the benefits of all alternative fuels, including biodiesel.

In June 2021, ECC co-hosted a webinar with NYC Small Business Services, NYC Department of Transportation, Con Edison, and Manhattan Beer Distributors to discuss funding and programs in NYC that are paving the way for a more sustainable future in transportation. The goal of the webinar was to reach NYC fleets and business owners with reliable information about alternative fuel options, such as biodiesel, into their operations.

*Phase III: August to October*

ECC executed a number of mostly outdoors, public-facing alternative-fuel events in the late summer/early fall that showcased biodiesel. These events featured our members and partners who use biodiesel blends, and showcased the fuel as an effective alternative to fossil fuels.

On September 22nd, we hosted our 12th Annual Stakeholder Meeting (ASM12) in Queens, NY, in conjunction with NYC’s 32nd Annual Vehicle and Equipment Show. At ASM12, ECC hosted a morning panel session including biodiesel and biofuels in the topic line-up, with a presentation from the United Soybean Board’s Karen Edwards about innovations in bio-based products.

On October 16th, ECC held our annual Empire Clean Vehicle Festival in Manhattan, NY, after a year off due to the pandemic. During the event, ECC shared fact sheets on biodiesel and bio-based products. ECC also invited “BioBus”, a school bus converted into a mobile science lab that currently runs on B20 (NYC’s standard biodiesel blend). BioBus was present at the NYC Vehicle and Equipment show and was running on conventional diesel at the time. The BioBus team had discussions with ECC staff and the NYC Department of Citywide Administrative Services, and was able to quickly transition to a cleaner, safer biodiesel blend.

*Phase IV: November to January*

As winter began, ECC had to shift its programming to virtual events as opposed to the outdoor events we held in the fall—such as our Annual Stakeholder Meeting and Empire Clean Vehicle Festival, which featured biodiesel-powered vehicles in fleets at gatherings in New York City.

On December 15th, we hosted a free, public webinar titled “From the Farm to Your Fuel Tank: The Benefits of Biodiesel and Renewable Diesel” with Greater Long Island Clean Cities Coalition (GLICC). The webinar had four distinct sections, plus a Q&A section at the end:

* Overview of Biodiesel and Renewable Diesel: Joy Gardner, ECC and Rita Ebert, GLICC
* Biofuels and NYC Fleets: Keith Kerman, NYC DCAS
* Federal Biofuel Incentives: Jill Hamilton, SESI
* Other Bio-based Products: Rita Ebert, GLICC

The well attended webinar covered a basic overview of the chemistry and sources of biodiesel—as well as New York’s regional agricultural importance to biodiesel production—before moving to a discussion of NYC Department of Citywide Administrative Services’ use of biodiesel. The next section of the webinar featured a discussion of the policy landscape around biodiesel, including the anticipated growth of biodiesel sales due to upcoming climate and low-carbon fuel standards. Finally, GLICC’s Rita Ebert presented about renewable diesel and its applications. View a recording of the webinar on YouTube [here.](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7mBOBtyV1PM)

In total, ECC was able to host six events with a biodiesel and biofuel focus.

* 1. **Farmer outreach**

ECC has been in contact with farmers in an effort to spotlight more of them for our primarily downstate audience. Despite our efforts, we were only able to interview and spotlight two farmers, the latter of whom was Ralph Lott of Ralph Lott and Son Farms. His spotlight went in our November 23rd newsletter as well as on all social media platforms.

For our previous interviews with Ralph Lott and with Todd DuMond in Q3, ECC used a set of interview questions in preparation for the interviews. The interviews took about 30 minutes each and were held over the phone or Zoom.

* + - Interview questions:
      1. Please describe your operation, including where you are located and the services you provide.
      2. What sustainability efforts have you incorporated into your operations?
      3. What do you see as your role in sustainability and environmentalism in New York State?
      4. What goals do you have for the coming years? What have you had to adapt to recently in the industry?
      5. Is there anything else you would like us to know about being a New York State grower?
    - Outreach list to-date:
      1. Rodman “Ralph” Lott, Rodman Lott & Son Farms
      2. National Biodiesel Board
      3. United Soybean Board
      4. Ryan Lamberg, Independent Consultant

# **Summary of Work**

Work is 100% complete.

ECC’s 2021 Soy in the City Campaign began in January 2021 with three explicit goals: to 1) increase awareness about the connection between food and fuel; to 2) increase visibility and support for New York-based soybean farmers; and to 3) reduce air pollution by transitioning fleets to clean, renewable biodiesel and soy-based products.

While ECC was very successful in disseminating biofuel and biodiesel knowledge despite the confines of the COVID-19 pandemic, our goal of connecting with soy and corn farmers in upstate New York proved difficult. We were only able to feature two farm operations during the course of our year-long campaign. 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. Biofuels featured prominently in our event planning and outreach materials. Moving into 2022, ECC will continue to promote biodiesel as a sustainable, domestically produced vehicle fuel on our social media and newsletter channels.