



ULSTER COUNTY

LEGISLATIVE NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Propane Pilot Program Progresses

(Kingston, NY) Five existing Ulster County Sheriff transport vans have been approved for a county pilot program exploring alternative fuels as a result of the Legislature's vote at their February 17th session. This seemingly simple pilot program generated a broad range of policy discussions during its four month discussion phase. The approved pilot program will retrofit five Sheriff vehicles for liquid propane gas use.

According to the Propane Education and Research Council, "Propane is produced from both natural gas processing and crude oil refining. Propane is an approved, clean fuel listed in the 1990 Clean Air Act as well as the National Energy Policy Act of 1992."

"I started this discussion during my State of the County address last March," stated Legislative Chairman John Parete. "It took a year of asking folks, doing the research and seeking out the right fit for a pilot program but finally we have a place to start for a future countywide alternative fuel policy. I never said this was the alternative fuel answer for the entire County fleet. Really, I entered the discussion seeking compressed natural gas for the vehicles but through discussion and evaluation, we found propane, a cleaner fuel, to be the right fit for the Sheriff's vehicles."

"I thought this was a good idea when Chairman Parete suggested it almost a year ago and included funding for the pilot in my 2015 budget," commented Sheriff Paul Van Blarcum. "My Office is still on board with the idea and I think that the inmate transport vehicles will be a great test" he concluded.

Propane got its start back in 1912 when Dr. Walter Snelling, a consulting chemist for the Bureau of Mines found it possible to remove the elements of natural gas which gave the highest level of heat and energy, while keeping out all that had less heating value, such as the inert gases and the methane. The New York Times article from March 31, 1912, which heralded Dr. Snelling success, noted "for every gallon of petroleum taken from the ground, more that a gallon of gas goes to waste, and it is this waste that the doctor is able to conserve."

The United States' Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy's Alternative Fuels Data Center provides basic information on alternative fuels, including Biodiesel, Ethanol, Natural Gas, Propane, and Hydrogen. They indicate "using propane as a vehicle fuel increases energy security, provides convenience and performance benefits, and improves public health and the environment."

Minority Leader Ken Ronk, Jr. stated, "The Republican Caucus is not only committed to creating a cleaner, greener County vehicle fleet, we are also intent on using American energy sources; which are also significantly less costly to the taxpayer."

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