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Press Release

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[Metro-North](#)

IMMEDIATE

MTA Metro-North Railroad Goes Green

MTA Metro-North Railroad received praise from environmentalists on Tuesday for switching to Ultra-Low Sulfur Diesel fuel for its locomotives five years before federal regulations require.

The Federated Conservationists of Westchester County presented the railroad with its Green Seal Award at a ceremony at Croton Point Park on the Hudson River.

"FCWC is pleased to honor Metro-North for its leadership in helping to improve local air quality by switching to ultra low sulfur diesel fuel, the cleanest burning diesel fuel," said Dr. Herbert Cox, President of the Federation, a non-profit coalition of hundreds of environmental organizations and concerned individuals founded in 1965. "This is an important step for Metro-North to take in setting a local example for others who use diesel fuel in their fleets. By switching to ULSD Metro-North is protecting public health, especially those most susceptible to the health impacts of diesel exhaust - children and the elderly."

The Green Seal Award was created to recognize individuals, organizations and businesses in Westchester and the region for outstanding actions taken to improve the environment.

"Our decision to accelerate the switch to Ultra Low Sulfur Diesel fuel is an example of our commitment to be a good neighbor to the communities we serve," said George Walker, the railroad's Senior Vice President of Operations. "We are delighted to accept this award from the dedicated members of the Federation who live right here in our service territory."

Amendments to the Clean Air Act, which were passed in 1990, mandated that locomotives and marine engines must reduce emissions by switching to Ultra Low Sulfur Diesel by 2012.

Ultra Low Sulfur Diesel is fuel that has had the sulfur content reduced from about 500 parts per million in ordinary diesel to less than 15 parts per million. By using ULSD, the railroad's sulfur emissions will be reduced by about 95%. Sulfur contributes to acid rain, which destroys forests, kills fish and corrodes buildings throughout the northeastern United States.

Using Ultra Low Sulfur Diesel fuel in all its locomotives also reduces emissions of particulate matter by 13%. At Metro-North, the switch to cleaner fuel will result in a reduction in particulate emissions of about 10 tons a year.

"By completing the switch in January, five years before the deadline set by Congress, Metro-North will keep 50 tons of particulates out of the air that would have been released if we had waited to make the switch in 2012 as required," Walker noted.

This cleaner fuel also will result in a 13% reduction in hydrocarbon emissions, a 6% reduction in carbon monoxide emissions and a 3% reduction in nitrogen oxide emissions.

In an area like the Lower Hudson Valley where air quality does not meet federal standards and where Metro-North uses seven millions of gallons of fuel a year, this represents a significant reduction in air pollution in the territory. And that's above the reduction achieved by the 77 million car trips not taken by people who use the railroad each year.

Metro-North uses diesel-powered locomotives in the unelectrified portion of its territory, the Upper Hudson, the Upper Harlem Line and the Danbury and Waterbury Branches of the New Haven Line, a total of 212 route miles. (On the west side of the Hudson River, the Port Jervis and Pascack Valley Lines are not electrified, but that service is provided by New Jersey Transit, which is transitioning to ULSD.)

Before making the switch, Metro-North negotiated with fuel dealers, who agreed not to raise prices for the Ultra Low Sulfur Diesel. The railroad also sought assurances from locomotive manufacturers that ULSD would not compromise the locomotives' performance. The low sulfur fuel does require more frequent changes of the lubricating oil.

However, Metro-North is taking the steps needed to burn used lubricating oil to heat the Croton-Harmon Shop - one of several recycling efforts underway.

When Metro-North Railroad was created in 1983 to take over passenger service from failing freight railroads, it inherited a host of environmental problems including, railroad ties dumped in wetlands, leaky underground petroleum tanks, a contaminated wastewater treatment plant and improperly stored hazardous wastes.

"Metro-North has remedied the problems we inherited from predecessor railroads and we are now working proactively to minimize or eliminate negative

environmental impacts associated with operating a heavy railroad," Walker noted. "We are pleased to receive this award in recognition of our effort."