MTA Press Releases

Press Release May 19, 2020

MTA Headquarters IMMEDIATE

MTA Launches First Ever Pilot with UVC Proven to Kill COVID-19

First Phase of Pilot Will Deploy 150 Mobile Ultraviolet-C Disinfecting Units in Train Cars, Buses, Stations, and Occupational Facilities Across New York City Transit, With Phase Two Coming to LIRR and Metro-North

Pilot Will Evaluate Efficiency and Cost Effectiveness of UVC Technology as MTA Undertakes Most Aggressive Disinfecting & Cleaning Regimen in Agency History

Photos Are Available Here

Video Is Available Here

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) today announced an ultraviolet (UV) light pilot program proven to kill COVID-19, with the first phase set to launch on subways, buses, and other New York City Transit facilities throughout the system early next week.

The MTA pilot will deploy approximately 150 dual-headed mobile devices from Denver-based startup PURO Lighting to test and evaluate the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of UVC technology in a number of settings across New York City Transit including trains, buses, stations and occupational facilities, using strict protocols and procedures to ensure the safety of the employees and customers. After evaluation, the pilot's second phase will expand to Long Island Rail Road and Metro-North.

"This is a first of its kind pilot when it comes to transportation agencies around the world and we are proud to be a part of it. For nearly three months, the MTA has worked relentlessly to disinfect our entire fleet of subways and buses but we've always promised that we would explore any and all new approaches available to us as well," **said MTA Chairman and CEO Patrick J. Foye**. "The launch of this UVC pilot represents a promising next step in our ongoing efforts to identify technologies that can keep our customers and employees as safe as possible."

"Since the beginning of this crisis, I've made it very clear to my colleagues across New York City Transit that I'm open to any and every idea to keep the system safe," **said Interim President of New York City Transit Sarah Feinberg**. "This pilot is a tangible example of that approach coming to fruition. And this this is just the beginning. We continue to explore new options every day as we undertake the largest cleaning and disinfecting regimen in MTA history during the overnight closure of subway."

UVC light is an efficient, proven, and effective technology for eliminating viruses, including SARS-CoV-2 that causes COVID-19, from surfaces in MTA's system. UVC is demonstrated to kill viruses in many other applications, including hospital operating rooms, urgent care clinics, universities, and fire stations. The first phase of the pilot will focus on the feasibility of using UVC to eradicate COVID-19 in rolling stock, including car classes R188, R62, R46, R68, and R160, stations and yards at Corona, Coney Island, Jamaica and Pelham. Occupational facilities, including maintenance areas, crew rooms, operations and technology centers, and offices, will also be included in the pilot.

In March, MTA began its work with PURO to successfully demonstrate the efficacy of UVC technology in our subways and buses. The proof-of-concept used miniaturized UVC technology to allow Transit personnel to move the lamps easily and efficiently in and out of rolling stock and fixed locations.

As part of the proof-of-concept, the MTA requested that **Dr. David Brenner, Director, Center for Radiological Research, Columbia University** gain access to their containment laboratories at biosafety level three for the purpose of testing the efficacy of miniaturized UV lamps to kill COVID-19. This week, Dr. Brenner has reported the first-ever demonstrated test of UVC that efficiently kills the virus that causes COVID-19. The lab will now conduct additional testing before submitting the test for peer-reviewed publication.

"This crisis creates opportunities to bring in new technologies to solve once-in-a-generation challenge. The MTA is showing how it can rise to the occasion by innovating quickly and safely," **said MTA Chief Innovation Officer Mark Dowd**. "We identified PURO and we have been working closely them since mid-March to readapt their technology to the unique nature of MTA's rolling stock and infrastructure. We know UVC can help disinfect

surfaces in hospital operating rooms, and we owe it to our employees and customers to experiment with it in our system to keep them safe. If successful, the results could help disinfect our buses and train cars, crew rooms, and other facilities in a more timely and cost efficient."

"The UV light that will be used in the current overnight subway and bus disinfection program is very efficient in killing the virus that is responsible for COVID-19. What we are doing here is reducing the level of the virus in subways, and therefore decreasing the risk of anybody catching COVID-19 on the subway," said **Dr. Brenner**.

"In this time of great uncertainty, New Yorkers need to feel safe and have the confidence to venture back into normal life," said Webb Lawrence, co-founder of PURO Lighting. "We are extremely proud to be a part of the MTA's multi-layered approach to ensure their riders are entering a clean and safe environment."

This pilot is another aggressive step the MTA has taken in its nation-leading disinfecting effort to keep employees and customers safe by disinfecting the entire system every 24 hours. On May 6 the MTA started its historic closing of subway system from 1 a.m. to 5 a.m. so that every major touch point in stations and subway cars can be thoroughly disinfected. The MTA has also launched an industry-leading "Temperature Brigade" on March 24, taking employee temperatures at work locations, implemented rear-door boarding on buses and eliminated cash transactions at stations and on commuter rails to prevent person-to-person contact to ensure the safety of operating employees. The health and safety of the MTA's employees and customers continues to be the agency's top priority.