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[MTA Headquarters](#)

IMMEDIATE

MTA Reduces Carbon Emissions and Moves Forward With Earth-Friendly Efforts

Green Bonds, Sustainable Railroad Ties and LED Lights on Bridges Among the Initiatives

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) is taking small steps to make a big difference by reducing the region's carbon footprint. The MTA continues to use cleaner fuels, more efficient engines, and energy-saving methods across its operations. Perhaps more importantly, as ridership grows and more New Yorkers choose to use mass transit they are helping reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) throughout the region. While the MTA itself produces 2.1 million metric tons of carbon emissions, transit operations actually reduce the overall emissions of the region by 19 million metric tons annually.

The MTA counts emissions from its entire fleet of commuter trains, subways and buses, associated stations, two tunnels and seven bridges, and the maintenance and administrative facilities needed to run its network. Emissions from all facilities and fleets are reported annually to [The Climate Registry](#), using its reporting protocols. These emissions, in turn, are independently verified by an American National Standards Institute (ANSI) accredited body. In 2014, the MTA released a total of .27 pounds of carbon dioxide (CO₂) gases per passenger mile. On a per passenger-mile basis, emissions from single occupancy vehicles are up to five times higher than the per-passenger mile emissions of mass transit. The passenger miles traveled numbers are taken from the [National Transit Database](#) (NTD), a program established by Congress to be the Nation's primary source for information and statistics on the transit systems of the United States.

"When you think about all the ways the MTA has reduced emissions within our five thousand square miles of our network, and then you put that into the perspective of the overall reduction of the regional carbon footprint – it's a considerable feat," said MTA Chairman and CEO Thomas F. Prendergast. "As ridership continues to grow, that savings becomes even greater and helps secure a sustainable future for the next generation of customers."

By investing in transit, and its sustainable energy development, New Yorkers can play a vital role in protecting the environment. Back in February, the MTA offered its first-ever "Green Bonds" to the public. The \$500 million dollar bonds, which are certified by the Climate Bonds Initiative (CBI), will pay for continuing work on infrastructure renewal and upgrade projects on New York City Transit, Long Island Rail Road and Metro-North Railroad that were begun during the MTA's 2010-2014 Capital Program.

Green Bonds, also known as Climate Bonds, were popularized in 2010 as a method for raising capital for climate-friendly projects across the globe. In 2015, \$41.8 billion in Green Bonds were issued, according to Climate Bonds Initiative, an international nongovernmental, nonprofit organization dedicated to stimulating investment in projects and assets emphasizing environmental sustainability. MTA's Transportation Revenue Green Bonds, Series 2016A (Climate Bond Certified) is the first bond issuance to be certified in the U.S. under CBI's Low Carbon Transport Standard.

The MTA has continued its commitment to "going green" by expanding the procurement of sustainable railroad ties as recommended by the Blue Ribbon Commission on Sustainability. The MTA has reduced the purchase of tropical hardwood ties whenever possible and prioritized alternatives such as oak and composite plastic. In fact, New York City Transit has recently installed approximately 6,500 recycled plastic ties in a major Staten Island Railway (SIR) track renewal project to repair significant damage caused by Superstorm Sandy. Several hundred plastic ties have been in place for several years along ballasted tracks across other areas of the NYCT system. They have also been installed in the Montague and Steinway tubes.

Long Island Rail Road has been installing plastic ties in ballasted tracks since 2002. In addition, Metro-North and LIRR no longer purchase tropical hardwood railroad ties. While New York City Transit primarily uses creosote-treated wood such as oak and pine, the tropical hardwood is purchased only in small quantities and only if it has been certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).

And, the green initiatives extend beyond the rails. MTA Bridges and Tunnels continues to install energy-efficient lighting at its facilities as part of an agency-wide effort to reduce energy use and costs. In 2009, the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge became the first Bridges & Tunnels span to convert to the light-emitting diode (LED) lights from the original mercury-vapor bulbs. On Thursday, the Bronx-Whitestone Bridge became the last of the agency's four suspended spans to upgrade its "necklace" light fixtures to the energy-saving LED lights.

The LED lights help reduce energy use and electric costs by 73 percent while shining at the same brightness and color temperature as the mercury-vapor bulbs. They also last longer, about seven years compared to two years for mercury-vapor lights. This will mean fewer maintenance-related traffic disruptions for motorists, and shorter periods of time when crews will need to climb the bridge cables for bulb changes. To watch a video about the installation of composite track ties along Staten Island Railway, [click here](#).

For more information about the MTA's sustainability efforts, visit mta.info/environment