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New Study Reveals that New York Ferries are Hundreds of Times More Polluting Per Passenger than Cars, Buses or Trains

New York, NY -- A groundbreaking new study concludes that commute ferries operating in New York Harbor are far more polluting per passenger than cars, buses or trains. Unless they are cleaned up, by the time new federal air quality standards take effect in 2007, the ferries will be 100 to 1,000 times more polluting per passenger mile than new cars.

Rapid ferry expansion in New York Harbor is worsening the region's unhealthy air and threatening public health, and will for years to come if no action is taken. Bluewater Network is calling on New York City and state policymakers to require use of cleaner fuels and technologies before new ferries are put on the water and to clean up the existing fleet. The problem is that ferries operate on uncontrolled diesel engines that remain in service for 20 or 30 years or more.

"We are not saying that you should drive instead of taking the ferry, but that the fleet must be cleaned up now, not later," said Teri Shore, Clean Vessels Campaign Director for Bluewater Network, a national environmental group based in San Francisco that sponsored the new study.

The study found that ferries must become 95 percent cleaner in order to catch-up with emissions reductions being achieved by cars and buses. Cars have become 98 percent cleaner in recent decades. The results came from comparing diesel exhaust from three New York-New Jersey ferries to air emissions produced by landside alternatives in 2007.

"The comparison is stark," said Professor Alexander Farrell of University of California at Berkeley, a lead author of the study, titled, *Air Pollution from Passenger Ferries in New York Harbor*. "Passenger ferries have a long way to go before they can provide access and mobility while protecting the environment."

The study is the first to compare ferries with landside commute options in New York Harbor. The three routes analyzed were: Weekhawken to Pier 79 (38th St.), Manhattan to Atlantic Highlands, and Staten Island to Manhattan.

In every instance, the study found ferries produce more air pollution per passenger trip than landside alternatives for each route. Using 2007 as a baseline, when new standards for ferries, cars and buses go into effect, the study found that emissions of cancer-causing particulate matter were as much as 100 times higher per passenger than land modes. Releases of smog-forming nitrogen oxides were as high as 1,000 times greater per passenger than other modes. The findings were derived from New York commute patterns and ferry ridership.

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