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WATERFRONT ALLIANCE**

**New York State launches zero-emissions ferries bill**

NEW YORK (May 19, 2026) — Today, the New York Legislature introduced the Clean Ferries Bill ([A11303/S10381](#)) sponsored by Assembly Member Simon and Senator Kavanagh. In New York State, the transportation sector accounts for almost one-third of all greenhouse gas emissions and has one of the largest passenger ferry markets rivaling Washington state's ferry system. New York's major passenger ferry market runs largely on toxic diesel fuel. NYC Ferry alone emits 180,000 kg of nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>) a year, equivalent to 116,000 cars. NO<sub>x</sub> contributes to ozone pollution linked to hundreds of premature deaths and thousands of emergency visits annually in New York City.

The bill calls for publicly funded ferry companies to purchase only zero-emission vessels starting in 2028, and for other public vessels in New York State waters to be zero-emission by 2032. It also calls for the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) to study electric charging stations along the Hudson River and canal system to support the transition to zero-emission watercraft.

***Statements from groups:***

"Diesel ferry exhaust increases the risks of asthma and cancer. Fuel spills harm aquatic life and can devastate New York's waterways. None of this is inevitable. Zero-emission ferries are already here, already proven and already saving operators millions in reduced fuel use. This bill is about choosing clean air, clean water and clean communities. The only question is how long we're willing to wait," said **Fern Uennatornwarangoon, Climate Campaign Director at Pacific Environment.**

"According to one estimate, zero-emission vessels could save NYC Ferry nearly \$250 million over a 15-year period, with a payback of eight years. NYC Ferry's operating subsidies are considerably higher than those of the New York City Subway. This bill is a leading example of affordability, where clean technology saves taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars with the vital additional benefit of eliminating air and water pollution," **Wayne Arden, Vice Chair, Sierra Club New York City Group.**

"Waterways are the lifeblood of the communities that surround them. From the Long Island Sound, Hudson and East Rivers, and across Lake Champlain, ferries zip across New York's beloved waterways. Waterfront Alliance not only envisions the expansion of ferry service for commuters and tourists, but also clean and green vessels to carry riders. We proudly support Senator Kavanagh's and Assembly Member Simon's legislation calling for only zero-emission vessels to be purchased after 2028. Across the nation, and world, zero-emissions ferries carry riders while supporting ambitious climate goals. Our waterfronts have a central role in achieving

New York's climate goals. We urge the state legislature to pass this bill to deliver meaningful climate solutions for waterfront communities across the state," **said Julie Raskin, President and CEO at Waterfront Alliance.**

"This bill is a catalyst for driving zero-emissions technology to more of the transportation sector, which is one of the largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions. Reducing these harmful emissions helps the State to meet its climate goals and to curb the extreme impacts that climate change is having on the Adirondack Park," said **Claudia Braymer, Executive Director of Protect the Adirondacks! Inc.**

### ***The technology is here and is landing in New York***

SeaStreak, a ferry company providing services between Monmouth County in New Jersey and Manhattan, last year received a \$55M EPA grant to deploy three zero-emission ferries and two high-speed shoreside charging systems.

In August 2025, New York City launched its first hybrid-electric ferry — the [Harbor Charger](#) — offering its passengers a cleaner ride to Governors Island. The ferry is expected to save the city more than \$200,000 per year in fuel costs.

Several European countries are well on their way to transitioning their ferry fleets to zero-emission, including [Norway](#), which now has 102 electric ferries and passenger boats operating across 67 routes and has implemented a policy requiring all ferries operating along its coastline to transition to electric propulsion by 2030. Electric ferries are also seeing rapid uptake in Asia, with Bangkok deploying the first of 27 planned large electric ferries in 2020 and South Korea on its way to replacing 140 state-owned diesel-powered ferries with all-electric alternatives by 2030.

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