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Heating oil rail facility opens in Yaphank

July 19, 2012 by SARAH CRICHTON / sarah.crichton@newsday.com



A company that imports biodiesel by rail for eventual use as heating oil in [Long Island](#) homes officially opened its facility at the [Brookhaven](#) Rail Terminal in Yaphank Thursday.

Ultra Green imports the renewable energy product from the Midwest, [Canada](#) and upstate [Ontario](#) by rail to the terminal, where it's loaded onto trucks and taken to terminals in [New](#)

[Hyde Park](#) and elsewhere on the Island via [Long Island Rail Road](#) lines for blending into home heating oil.

Company vice president [Michael Cooper](#) said the Yaphank truck-rail depot provides vital storage space for more than a dozen rail cars of the product, ensuring Ultra Green can provide reliable, on-demand supply to [Long Island](#) customers, as well as providing backup for the firm's supply to the critical New York City market.

"BRT gives us the lowest cost location anywhere to bring our biodiesel," [Cooper](#) said. "It eliminates the need to use trucks on city bridges and along almost 70 miles of [Long Island](#) -- we bypass every tollway, we're helping make the air cleaner."

Yesterday's opening comes as support for the private truck-rail depot, Long Island's first such facility, appears to be growing. Rep. [Tim Bishop](#) (D-Southampton), in whose district the Yaphank facility is located, said Thursday he would "absolutely support" a federal funding application on behalf of [Brookhaven](#) Rail Terminal.

"I strongly support infrastructure investments that lay the foundation for private sector growth and job creation, and these rail projects have the added benefit of reducing truck traffic on congested Long Island roads," Bishop said.

BRT representative Judy White said terminal operators would apply for federal funds "in the very near future."

The site's partners rounded up \$40 million in private investment to get the depot up and running last September and now hope public dollars might be made available to help build a 400,000-square-foot warehouse that would enable more commodities to come and go from the depot.

The terminal has applied for \$7 million in state grants.

Yesterday's event was attended by a gaggle of elected officials -- including representatives of Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo, New York City Councilman James Gennaro (D-Queens), Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-Manhattan), as well as officials from Suffolk County and Brookhaven Town.

Nadler representative Robert Gottheim said the Yaphank facility could be a useful starting point for getting trucks off Long Island's congested roadways.

"But there is plenty of demand for more of these facilities," he said of the terminal, adding Nadler -- a longtime truck-rail depot proponent -- too would support federal dollars for the operation.

"We need this one, we need the Calverton project and we need Pilgrim State," said Gottheim referring to the state's stalled attempt to build a truck-rail yard in Brentwood.

The New York City Council earlier this year mandated that all heating oil within the five boroughs must contain 2 percent biodiesel effective Oct. 1. The Environmental Protection Agency has declared emissions from pure biodiesel as the sole fuel emissions nontoxic to human health.

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