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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 21, 2009

Hempstead Town, NYSERDA and National Grid Launch Long Island's First Hydrogen Fuel Station – Power-Up Zero Emission Car

Driving in a zero emission hydrogen fuel cell vehicle, Hempstead Town Supervisor Kate Murray steered the township toward a greener, cleaner future as she unveiled the first hydrogen fueling station on Long Island. Along with Councilwoman Angie Cullin, National Grid, the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), LIPA and several clean energy organizations, Supervisor Murray and members of the town board introduced the latest component of Hempstead's Clean Energy Project: a pure hydrogen, blended hydrogen/compressed natural gas (HCNG) and compressed natural gas fueling station located at the town's Department of Conservation and Waterways in Point Lookout.

"We are very excited to be at the forefront of an innovative project that explores what we can do to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and improve our environment," Supervisor Murray said. "Hempstead Town's hydrogen fueling station will demonstrate how hydrogen gas can be used effectively and safely as a source of energy that provides a potential solution to environmental degradation." "All of the fuels pumped at the facility will significantly reduce or eliminate the harmful emissions that contribute to the production of greenhouses gases," added Councilwoman Angie Cullin.

Hempstead Town's new fueling station is a major research and demonstration project that will help to assess the viability of hydrogen and HCNG as alternative fuels, with the goal of identifying cleaner alternatives to gasoline that will reduce fossil fuel dependency. It is the first hydrogen fueling station on Long Island, and the fifth station in the New York metropolitan area. Presently, the two closest stations are located in JFK Airport and the City of White Plains, with another station planned for the Bronx.

Murray explained that the goal of the hydrogen fueling station project is threefold: to demonstrate, evaluate and educate. Working with a broad state and national coalition, Hempstead officials will demonstrate hydrogen energy technology and its potential. This demonstration will underscore the importance of exploring prospective solutions to fossil fuel dependency, air pollution and other environmental degradation. The Supervisor also said that the hydrogen fuel site will serve as an important educational tool to raise awareness, particularly with students, about hydrogen and HCNG as alternative fuels. Finally, engineers and scientists will evaluate the practical potential of developing hydrogen and hydrogen blended fuels for limited institutional use, commercial/industrial applications and broad consumer applications.

Construction of the fueling station cost approximately $2.2 million. NYSERDA provided $900,000 in funding for the project, and National Grid contributed $55,000. Additionally, the New York State alternative fuel vehicle fueling infrastructure tax credit will contribute 50 percent of the total cost of the refueling station. Hempstead Town's Department of Conservation and Waterways managed the project construction and furnished much of the labor through the town's work force. EmPower, an organization with extensive solar-hydrogen energy technologies experience, served as the assistant project manager and will collect data from the station to produce a report about its energy, environmental and economic performance. Air Products, a global industrial gas company, supplied the fueling technology and installed the facility's hydrogen infrastructure, while Proton Energy Systems supplied the hydrogen "electrolyzer." PW Grosser served as a consulting engineer on the project.

“Hydrogen has great promise to be the fuel of the future because it can be converted to useful energy through a zero emissions process,” Supervisor Murray explained.

While it does not exist on its own, hydrogen can be derived from numerous sources, including water. At Hempstead Town’s fuel station, pure hydrogen will be produced via electrolysis, a process that uses electricity to split water. Fuel Cell vehicles will convert pure hydrogen to electricity via an electrochemical process leaving zero tailpipe emissions. The station will be capable of providing 12 kg per day of hydrogen gas, which can fill approximately four vehicles daily. Additionally, the fueling station will include a data monitoring system that will help inform the Town and others about the viability of hydrogen fuel.

Francis J. Murray, President and CEO of NYSERDA, said: “By investing in hydrogen-fueled vehicles and participating in NYSERDA’s Hydrogen Roadmap Initiative, the Town of Hempstead is on the leading edge of New York’s municipalities in exploring alternative energy that will help reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and environmental impacts. We hope to continue working with Hempstead and other municipalities to take these types of actions to meet Governor Paterson’s goals of reducing our dependence on fossil fuels and improving our air quality while bolstering a Green Economy in New York State.”

Dan Dessanti, Vice President of Product Development for National Grid said, "Today's historic grand opening for the first Hydrogen Fueling station on Long Island would not have been possible without the forward-thinking leadership of Supervisor Murray. This important project that we are showcasing today will enable a sharing of research and technology that we hope will help lead to a complete overhaul of our transportation system."

Kevin S. Law, President and CEO of the Long Island Power Authority, said: “LIPA is pleased to be partnering with NYSERDA and the Town of Hempstead on this exciting and innovative project to assess using hydrogen as an alternative to fossil fuel to move our vehicles. This project completes the eastern-most portion of the ‘NYS Hydrogen Corridor’ designed to connect Buffalo to Albany to Long Island to Canada. The only way we will be successful in reducing our dependence on fossil fuels and better preparing for the future is through these types of partnerships with committed communities and government leaders like Supervisor Murray, who continue to lead the way.”

Five years ago, NYSERDA began planning for and funding a Hydrogen Roadmap initiative that included three fueling stations across the state (Hempstead, Albany International Airport and Rochester Institute of Technology). Hempstead Town is now the latest link in this roadmap. NYSERDA has also partnered with General Motors to have several GM Fuel Cell-powered vehicles (the Equinox) demonstrated at the stations.

Hempstead Town utilizes natural gas vehicles in its municipal fleet. Additionally, blended hydrogen/compressed natural gas will fuel a new shuttle bus to be used for the Town’s Senior Enrichment Program. The Ford E450 shuttle bus, supplied by the Hythane Company, will be upfitted to run on natural gas and then calibrated to run on the HCNG fuel.

Under the leadership of Supervisor Kate Murray, Hempstead Town has completed a number of progressive renewable energy projects including utilizing solar energy at three government buildings, employing wind energy at Norman J. Levy Park and Preserve, utilizing electric cars among various town departments, and unveiling Long Island's first fleet of natural gas taxis. Additionally, the Conservation and Waterways Department hosts a self-relying “green” energy solar office and a novel solar and wind powered shellfish nursery that was also co-funded by NYSERDA.

“I want to thank NYSERDA and National Grid for working closely with the town to support innovative uses of alternative energy,” Supervisor Murray concluded. “Along with the other components of our Energy Park, the hydrogen fueling station will help us to lay the groundwork for a cleaner community and a greener planet for future generations.”

For more information on Hempstead Town’s hydrogen fueling station and the Clean Energy Project, please visit www.tohcleanenergyproject.org.

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