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Blue Highways Program Demonstrates Future of Urban Freight: Fresh Seafood Delivered from Hunts Point to South Street Seaport via Low-Carbon Freight Ferry and E-Cargo Bikes

Sustainable Last Mile Delivery demonstration shows how maritime transport combined with electric cargo bikes can reduce truck dependency, cut emissions, and reduce congestion in the nation's most densely populated city.

NEW YORK, NY – December 17, 2025 – Empire Clean Cities and local partners in maritime transportation, sustainable urban logistics, and New York City's seafood industry completed a successful maritime delivery demonstration on Wednesday, December 17th, showing how maritime transport paired with electric cargo bikes can reduce truck dependency and cut diesel emissions in urban freight delivery.

Fresh seafood from Blue Ribbon Fish traveled from the Fulton Fish Market Cooperative at Hunts Point to the Tin Building at the South Street Seaport via U.S. Coastal Service's freight ferry, arriving at the South Street Seaport Museum's Pier 16 in Lower Manhattan. The cargo was then transferred to heavy-duty Fulpra e-cargo bikes, operated by Net Zero Logistics, for final zero-emission delivery to the Tin Building. This freight delivery demonstration replaced a typical diesel truck delivery trip.

The demonstration advances the goals of the Blue Highways program, a joint effort by the NYC Department of Transportation (NYC DOT) and the NYC Economic Development Corporation (NYC EDC) to activate the city's robust network of local waterways for the sustainable movement of goods. This demonstration is part of a broader project funded by the U.S. Department of Energy, the *Sustainable Last-Mile Delivery in Dense Metros* project led by Empire Clean Cities (with partners Barretto Bay Strategies, Freight Matters, The Hub NYC, and Green City Force*).*

Addressing NYC's Freight Challenges
New York City moves nearly 90% of its freight by truck, with more than 2 million packages delivered daily. This creates significant congestion, emissions, and safety challenges, particularly in environmental justice communities. "New York City is going 'back to the future,' investing in the Blue Highways program and harnessing the full power of our waterfront to make deliveries and transportation more efficient and sustainable," said **NYCEDC President & CEO Andrew Kimball.** "Today's Blue Highways demonstration between the Fulton Fish Market in the

Bronx, one of the busiest trucking destinations in all of New York City, and Pier 16 in Manhattan, is a perfect example of how we can improve quality of life for New Yorkers – from mitigating truck traffic to reducing harmful pollution – all by shifting freight from our roadways to our waterways."

"Waterways are the new highways in New York City! New York's waterways built this city—now they're helping us create a cleaner, safer, and smarter way to deliver the goods New Yorkers rely on," said **NYC DOT Commissioner Ydanis Rodriguez**. "Blue Highways is how we bring a 20th century freight system into the 21st century, and when we move goods by water and deliver them by sustainable modes of transportation like cargo bikes, everyone wins—our streets, our air, and our neighborhoods."

"ECC is proud to support this demonstration as part of the broader Blue Highways program," said **Joy Gardner, Executive Director at Empire Clean Cities**. "Activating our waterways for freight is not just about reducing truck traffic—it's about reimagining how goods move through our city and advancing clean transportation solutions to ensure clean air for future generations."

Reconnecting with History through Modern Innovation

The demonstration route traced a symbolic journey from the modern fish market back to the historic seafood district, landing at Pier 16, home of the South Street Seaport Museum.

"The Fulton Fish Market Cooperative had waterfront access for 180 of our 200-year existence before moving to the Bronx 20 years ago. This demonstration is an example of alternative delivery methods both old and new, which Blue Ribbon and the Fulton Fish Market are exploring to ensure a more sustainable future for our City and our industry's supply chain, but this demo represents more than that," said **Warren Kremin, CEO, Blue Ribbon Fish and Board Member, Fulton Fish Market Cooperative.** "This is a connection between the old yet modernized market with the old seaport district and new market, by way of our roots and livelihood: our waterways. What is seen as innovation feels like a homecoming."

"Our supply chain is critical to feeding NYC and fresh seafood distribution is essential to NYC's restaurant and tourism industries. Currently, our supply chain is unsustainable, and the answer is going back to what we know best as a port city. On behalf of the Fulton Fish Market Cooperative, we are proud to be spearheading and supporting Blue Highway and other decarbonization initiatives for the Bronx and Hunts Point Food Distribution. This demonstration and forthcoming pilots are examples of the progress and impact that can be made when industry and government put their heads together to serve local community needs, and take action. For now, we educate, mobilize, test, and collect data, but we're on a rapid track for implementation of a new network and means to distribute goods throughout our City. Give it two years and these cargo trikes buzzing around downtown can be the norm. That means more trucks off the road, safer streets, and cleaner air for our communities," said **Nicole Ackerina, CEO, Fulton Fish Market Cooperative.**

"South Street Seaport Museum celebrates waterborne transport. This innovative pilot program will demonstrate what we know: the "Blue Highway" has been the most effective, efficient, and sustainable method of moving goods and people all along." said **Captain Jonathan Boulware, President & CEO, South Street Seaport Museum.** "The Blue Highways program marries a respect for history with relevant action, honoring New York City's origins as a seaport. We are delighted to host this demonstration at historic Pier 16 in the East River."

"U.S. Coastal Service is proud to be the Blue Highways operator for today's demonstration and to highlight how short-sea shipping can contribute to a cleaner, more resilient freight system," said **Ilana Mayid-Dennis, President of USCS.** "We are committed to building practical, end-to-end urban marine freight solutions and advancing toward the development of a purpose-built, zero-emission fleet for New York Harbor. This demonstration between the new Fulton Fish Market and the historic South Street Seaport reflects how the harbor that once moved all of the City's goods can help do so sustainably again — and how collaboration across sectors can move New York toward its climate and transportation goals to reduce impacts on our local communities."

The collaboration signals a broader transition in New York City toward maritime freight delivery across the city's navigable waterways, decarbonizing food miles in the supply chain, activating waterfront assets for freight, practical deployment of micro-freight vehicles in the food distribution sector, strengthening resilience in local supply chains, and reducing truck traffic and carbon emissions in accordance with the NYC Blue Highways Roadmap.

The demonstration featured specialized Fulpra heavy-duty e-cargo bikes capable of handling substantial loads while maintaining zero emissions for last-mile delivery. These vehicles represent the practical deployment of micro-freight solutions that complement marine freight operations.

"We are proud to participate in this first of a kind sustainable delivery initiative in New York City. Today we demonstrated how our Fulpra e-bikes serve as efficient last-mile delivery vehicles, transporting over 400lbs of fish at ⅓ the total cost of ownership of a delivery van. We look forward to 2026 and scaling up this delivery program and sales of Fulpra e-bikes," said **Steven Balinsky, CEO & Co-Founder of The Hub NYC**.

"This first delivery of Blue Ribbon Fish via Blue Highways represents more than a successful shipment—it demonstrates a new, lower-carbon future for urban logistics," said **Mark Chiusano, CEO, Net Zero Logistics**. "By shifting freight from trucks to waterways, we are directly cutting greenhouse gas emissions, reducing congestion on city streets, and improving air quality for New Yorkers. Moving seafood from the Fulton Fish Market to the Tin Building by water shows how legacy supply chains can be reimagined to meet today's climate imperative. This milestone reflects the power of collaboration with ECC, Fulpra, Barretto Bay and Net Zero Logistics—partners who share our commitment to building scalable, zero-emission pathways for moving goods through New York City."

"Con Agg Global and our partners at BDT and MSD Partners are thrilled to participate in today's maritime freight demo connecting our port at the Fulton Fish Market to the Market's historic home at South Street in lower Manhattan," said **Con Agg Global's CEO, Paul Granito**. "The City of New York was born at the water's edge and the water still offers us solutions to some of NYC's most vexing challenges. Maritime freight promises to reduce roadway congestion, help decarbonize last mile delivery, and bring a measure of relief to communities beleaguered by diesel truck traffic. We are proud to be at the vital center of the City's Blue Highway Action Plan and at the leading edge of positive change in Hunts Point."

Building on Federal Investment
In 2022, New York City secured over $5 million in federal funding to improve marine freight service and bolster the city's marine highway infrastructure. The Blue Highways initiative builds on this investment and the recommendations in PlaNYC: Getting Sustainability Done and NYC Blue Highways Roadmap.

Launched in 2024, the pilot project *Sustainable Last-Mile Delivery in Dense Metros*, funded by the U.S. Department of Energy, demonstrates how heavy-duty electric cargo bikes paired with maritime middle-mile transportation can reduce traffic emissions and congestion associated with the rapid growth in last-mile deliveries and e-commerce. The model is designed to scale throughout NYC and be replicated in other large cities. Over the next 2 years, the project will continue to expand the pilot, engage additional public and private stakeholders, and develop best practices for the industry.

The demonstration brings together key stakeholders across multiple sectors:
Fulton Fish Market Cooperative, Empire Clean Cities, Barretto Bay Strategies, NYCEDC U.S. Coastal Service, Net Zero Logistics, Fulpra US and The Hub NYC, Con Agg Global, Tin Building and Seaport Entertainment Group, South Street Seaport Museum, Freight Matters.

About Empire Clean Cities
Empire Clean Cities is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit environmental organization whose mission is to ensure clean air for future generations in New York City and the Lower Hudson Valley. We are committed to providing citizens and stakeholders with access to reliable information about alternative fuels, advanced vehicle technologies, and clean transportation practices.

About the NYC Blue Highways program
The Blue Highways program activates the city’s waterways for local and regional movement of goods – improving quality of life for New Yorkers by reducing congestion on our roadways, adding resiliency to the city’s supply chain, and tapping into our roots as a port city.