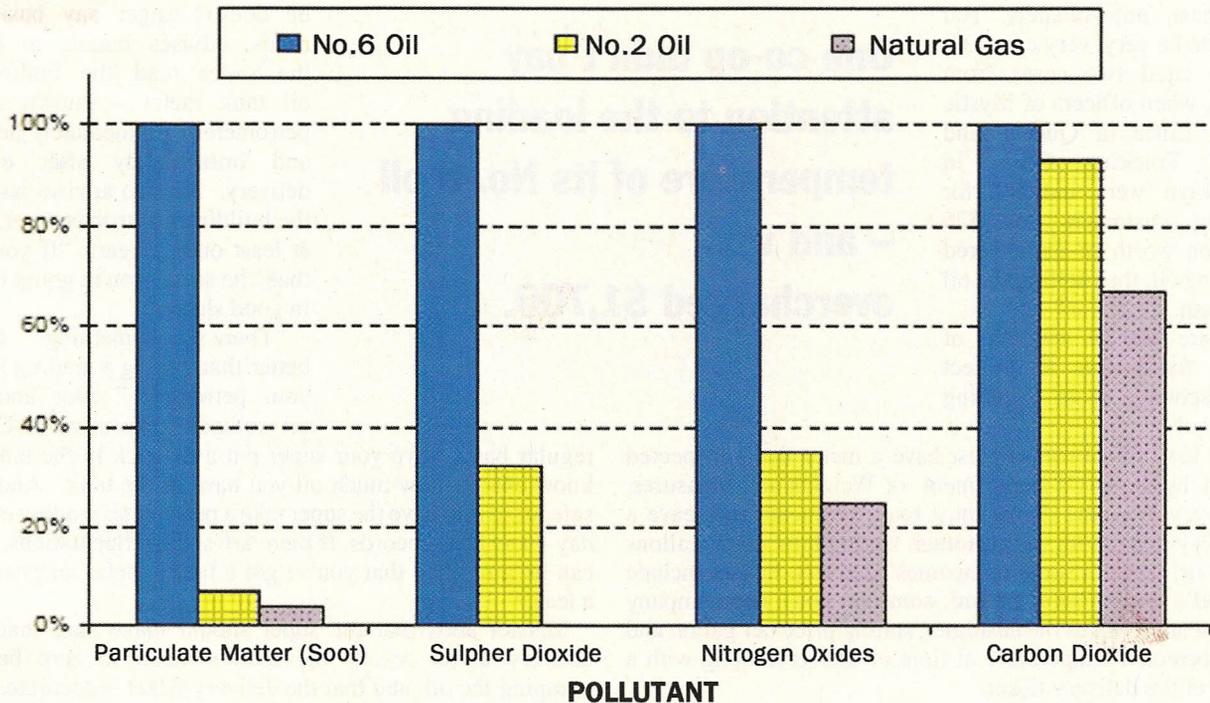


Emissions per BTU (as% of No.6 Oil)



Fuel Gets Cleaner

What the new laws mean.

By Tom Soter

TO BE GREEN IS TO BE CLEAN, but that can come at a cost. To get cleaner fuel, proposed city and state rules may ultimately require buildings to spend more.

The laws are coming relatively quickly: on June 22, the New York State Assembly approved legislation limiting sulfur levels in No. 2 heating oil to no greater than 15 parts per million – down from the current range of 2,000 to 15,000 parts per million – starting in July 2012. The State Senate passed the same bill. That was followed by a vote on July 29 in which the New York City Council unanimously approved legislation reducing the allowable level of sulfur for No. 4 heating oil from 3,000 parts per million to 1,500 parts per million, starting in October 2012. No. 2 heating oil accounts for over 70 percent of the heating oil used throughout New York City.

Experts report that burning heating fuels accounts for nearly 14 percent of fine particulate matter pollutants in the air. The particulate matter created by heating oil contains heavy metals and other pollutants that damage the lungs and the heart, contribute to asthma, and decrease life expectancy. The measure also requires that all heating oil used after October 1, 2012 contain at least two percent biodiesel fuel.

According to the Environmental Defense Fund report, *The Bottom of the Barrel: How the Dirtiest Heating Oil Pollutes Our Air and Harms Our Health*,

about 9,500 New York City buildings burn the dirtiest grades of heating oil, No. 4 and No. 6, resulting in more soot pollution than that produced by all the cars and trucks on the city's streets. No. 6 oil – unrefined sludge – is the dirtiest. No. 4 oil is a mixture of No. 6 and No. 2 but because of the sulfur content, it results in as much soot pollution as No. 6. The report found that one percent of buildings in the city created eighty-seven percent of all soot pollution arising from heating oil by relying on No. 4 and No. 6 fuels.

The Environmental Defense Fund report acted as one spur to pass the new laws, which industry professionals say are possibly the first steps in the city's goal of ultimately eliminating No. 4 and No. 6 oils.

The actual cost of the changeover from No. 4 and No. 6 to No. 2 oil – down the road by some years – is unknown, but there are estimates. "The price could be anywhere from \$2,000 to \$8,000 [a year] in increased costs for oil to oil, depending on your supply coming into the building, sizing, and other factors," says John Maniscalco, chief executive officer of the New York Oil Heating Association.

Building owners are – or should be – concerned about the future switch. "The change is going to lead to a

cleaner and greener city but at a cost that has yet to be determined, which may be very difficult for co-ops and condos to afford given the pressure on their budgets from uncontrollable expenses like real estate taxes, union contracts, benefits, and wages, and others," says Don Levy, an account executive at Brown Harris Stevens. "Being against clean energy is like being against motherhood and apple pie but that doesn't mean that [cleaner energy] doesn't come without a cost."

But Chris Wright, a senior vice president at Advanced Power Systems International, says he has a possible solution to cutting out the dirty fuel and keeping costs down. Wright is offering a product called the Fitch Fuel Catalyst, and a number of management firms – including

This catalyst is novel in that it induces reactions in fuels at temperatures far below where petroleum catalysts have historically been known to function. When placed in fuel lines, the reactions increase combustion efficiency while reducing emissions and particulates. These improvements to fuel result in lower fuel consumption and also reduced maintenance. "In other words," Wright notes, "the Fitch Fuel Catalysts reverse environmental damage, which happens to all fuels."

He adds that numerous burner

tests have been performed with the Fitch Fuel Catalyst on commercial and residential buildings on No. 2, No. 4, and No. 6 oils with emissions reductions and demonstrable fuel economy improvements ranging from five to eighteen percent. Soot from the smoke stacks has been eliminated and boiler cleaning has been dramatically improved. Wright admits that it will not reduce sulfur content but will eliminate other pollutants from the No. 2, No. 4, and No. 6 oils. Ultimately, that will make it a cleaner fuel. ■

Limiting sulfur levels in fuel oil now may portend the next steps – elimination of No. 4 and No. 6 oil completely.

Douglas Elliman, Charles Greenthal, and Ry Management – have already used it in their buildings.

According to Wright, hydrocarbon fuels usually contain hundreds of different molecules and some microorganisms. The nature of any batch of fuel is based on the type of crude oil from which it is derived, the refinery processes that are used in the manufacture, the additives, and how and for how long it is stored before it reaches the consumer. Once refined, fuel is attacked by ozone, by oxygen, and by acids in the air and environment. These attacks are forms of oxidation that rob fuel of its energy because it is, in essence, slow combustion, in which the environment steals energy from the fuel that the consumer paid for and which the refiner intended to deliver to the consumer.

The Fitch Fuel Catalyst, he says, induces reactions in hydrocarbon fuels at or near the point of use and is easily incorporated into a heating system.



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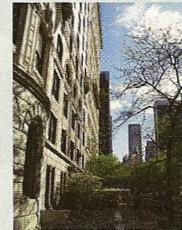
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