

# Blythe Danner Plus Natural Gas Garbage Trucks = Real Greening, Not "Green Washing"

What's Your Reaction:



Inspiring

Greedy

Typical

Scary

Outrageous

Amazing

Innovative

Infuriating

Read More: [Asthma](#) , [Blythe Danner](#) , [Environment](#) , [Environmental Justice](#) , [Environmentalism](#) , [Garbage Trucks](#) , [Green](#) , [Green Garbage Trucks](#) , [Greening](#) , [Gwyneth Paltrow](#) , [Haulers](#) , [Natural Gas](#) , [Natural Gas Garbage Trucks](#) , [New York City](#) , [Smithtown](#) , [Sustainable South Bronx](#) , [Union Square](#) , [Business News](#)



0

SHARE



0 views

retweet



1 vote

buzz up



Get Breaking News Alerts

**SIGN UP**



Share



Comments 1

Today, as she has done countless times over the last 35 years, actor **Blythe Danner** stood up for the environment. Not the newly-sexy environment, but the real, every day environment that affects you, me and everyone else, especially in a crowded urban place.

She attended a media event today in New York's Union Square where she helped **Energy Vision** - a national non-profit organization that studies

and promotes the benefits of clean, renewable petroleum-free transportation fuels - unveil two new natural gas garbage trucks. She let her famous face be photographed next to the two beautifully detailed trucks - and one NYC Department of Sanitation natural gas sweeper - and she even sat in the cabs of both trucks, cameras clicking away.

Why? Because she knows that what really counts in environmental progress is everyday, down on the ground, incremental environmentalism and real commitment. It's a journey, a long, long path.

It turns out that garbage trucks are among the most polluting vehicles on the road. "The 6,000 diesel refuse and recycling trucks on NYC streets have been a major source of air pollution," said Joanna Underwood, Energy Vision's president. "But these trucks here today and the growing fleet of new natural gas trucks are blazing a 'path to the future.' Within a few years use of natural gas trucks could become the industry norm in New York City."

Because of just the 38 natural gas trucks put on the streets in the NY region as a result of the four initiatives that were highlighted at today's Union Square event, New Yorkers will be spared the health risks, involving asthma, other respiratory illnesses and cancers associated with more than 124 tons a year of airborne particulates (soot) and smog-forming nitrogen oxides. Were half of the diesel refuse collection and recycling trucks operating in New York City traded in for natural gas models "more than 16,000 tons of pollutants would be eliminated a year, while reliance on a clean domestic fuel would eliminate the need for 23 million gallons a year of petroleum-based diesel fuel, which is getting more expensive by the day and relies on imported oil." This is from Energy Vision's new report,

["Fueling a Greener Future: NYC Metropolitan Region Garbage Fleets Commit to Alternative Fuel,"](#) that was released at the press event.

One of the good results of the new focus on green is that there are companies that are sincerely looking for ways to capitalize on both the environmental green and monetary green. And they are finding it.

The two companies' trucks that were featured in today's event belong to private haulers - [Filco Carting Corporation](#) and [Metropolitan Paper Recycling](#). Their CEO's were both clearly proud to be part an important movement and are truly committed to making it work for their companies.

"We found natural gas trucks to be the best, and I am proud to be here showing off one of these trucks," said Greg Bianco, Metropolitan Paper Recycling's CEO. "The good news has been that since we bought our trucks, with rising diesel prices, we are actually saving money. We will have a total of 11 CNG trucks by mid-2009," he added.

"The normal diesel trucks are just not good for the environment. Filco bought its first three natural gas trucks in late 2007," said Filco's CEO, Domenic Monopoli. "They are cutting edge. They generate very little noise and emit minimal emissions. Our company has already budgeted eight more trucks for 2008 and 2009."

Dr. Patrick Kinney from [Columbia University's School of Public Health](#) spoke about the sky high asthma rate in some communities, and the fact that using natural gas garbage trucks will reduce harmful emissions. He was seconded by Miquela Craytor, [Sustainable South Bronx's](#) Deputy Director. The South Bronx has seen, firsthand, the disproportionate and toxic results of literally being "dumped on" for many years, just like many other low income communities of color. "These communities are overwhelmingly affected by industries that are heavily truck-dependent. This leads to disproportionate impacts on health and low education levels as compared to other communities," said Ms. Craytor. "It's important to implement ways to reduce these toxins for everyone. "

Russell K. Barnett, Director for [Environment & Waterways for Smithtown](#) also had good economic and environmental news to report. "Fifteen months ago," he said, "our Township launched the first 100% natural gas-fueled refuse and recycling fleet on the East Coast. After taking a hard look at the instability of the world oil market, the ever increasing price of petroleum diesel fuel, and the environmental advantages of natural gas; the choice was clear. Now we've got 22 cleaner quieter trucks; we have a more secure fuel, we're saving money, and service and reliability have never been better!"

Rocco DiRico, Assistant Commissioner, Support Services, [NYC Department of Sanitation](#) said that the Department has "explored the new generation of CNG engines, has used natural gas street sweepers which perform well, and looks forward to evaluating the improved 'fourth generation' trucks."

The end of the event, however, clearly belonged to Ms. Danner, who stepped forward to speak about her own environmental activism and that of her family.

In a very unaffected and soft voice, she told of working for recycling when her now very famous daughter Gwyneth Paltrow was quite young and of teaching Gwyneth and brother Jake how to recycle and how to advocate for environmental change. Thinking about her own grandchildren, she ended the event by saying, "It is amazing that, for reducing air pollution, taking one old diesel truck off the streets is like removing 325 cars! Every child exposed to the new natural gas trucks will be a healthier child, and, by our becoming less oil dependent, every child will have a better chance for a secure future."

The current focus on "greening" is bringing real change, but it's also bringing out "green washers" - people and organizations who are getting on the green bandwagon to simply get ahead, but whose commitment to environmental change and environmental justice is less than skin deep.

Today's event featured two companies, one large city and one smaller municipality who have committed to "greening" with their livelihoods and with our tax dollars. And at least one celebrity who knows how it's done.