



# NEWS FROM THE ULSTER COUNTY COMPTROLLER

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## **COMPTROLLER AUERBACH URGES LEGISLATURE TO POSTPONE \$300,000 VEHICLES PURCHASE**

### **Comptroller Recommends Fleet Management Program Precede Acquisitions**

KINGSTON, NY (February 6, 2009)...Ulster County Comptroller Elliott Auerbach applauds the County Executive Mike Hein's commitment to establishing a comprehensive fleet management program and encourages the County Legislature to postpone a resolution scheduled for a vote on February 11, 2009 vote to approve \$300,000 for vehicle replacement until the fleet management program is instituted.

"A solid fleet management program will balance transportation and mobility needs with economies derived from volume purchasing, standardization of vehicle types and planned replacement cycles," said Auerbach. "The county must first establish a comprehensive understanding of its fleet needs necessary to fulfill the mission of its departments and agencies," explained the Comptroller.

Mr. Auerbach further suggested that the fleet need analysis include alternative options to satisfy some needs with, for example, public transportation, ample reimbursement for use of privately owned vehicles, seized/forfeited vehicles and the use of communication technology. He said socioeconomic benefits such as employee efficiency, improved air quality and market demand for alternative fuels should also be accounted for.

According the USGSA Guide to Federal Fleet Management, the use of alternative fuels in medium and heavy-duty vehicles offset significant amounts of petroleum because these vehicles use far

more fuel per mile than light-duty vehicles. In addition, they are usually fueled at a central location, assigned to a particular location, or garaged in a common area, all factors that make them good candidates for alternative fuels.

Cutting fuel consumption is fundamental to reducing pollution and fuel costs. "Fuel consumption can be reduced and emerging alternative fuel markets spurred by acquiring alternative fuel vehicles and fuel-efficient vehicles," said Auerbach, "but to become an effective program advance planning is required."

"I am not promoting an under-funded fleet where costs are shifted from acquisition to maintenance," explained the Comptroller, "but before additional hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars are spent on vehicles we should have a comprehensive assessment of the current fleet, delineate our needs and the options for meeting them, and institute a comprehensive oversight program based on policies that assure sustainable practices across the board," explained the Comptroller.

Taking it one step further, the Comptroller asked the Legislature and County Executive to establish a goal of reducing vehicle petroleum use by 80% within five years.

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