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NYC LARGE BUILDINGS CONTINUE DROP IN CARBON EMISSIONS AND ENERGY USE

Latest Energy Use and Water Report from Urban Green Council finds that emissions from benchmarked properties dropped by 23 percent since 2010.

New York (December 16, 2020)— Large and midsize buildings are responsible for over half of NYC’s building emissions, or 34 percent of the citywide total, according to a new report from Urban Green Council. ***New York City’s 2020 Energy and Water Use Report*** evaluates the energy used by NYC’s large buildings and whether they’re on track to meet the city’s climate goals. The study found that energy use fell eight percent since 2010 and emissions fell 22.6 percent among regularly benchmarked properties during the same time. The emissions data is calculated using benchmarked energy data and emissions rates from NYC’s Greenhouse Gas Inventory. (In 2009, NYC adopted the *Greener, Greater Buildings Plan*, which requires owners of large buildings to report their energy and water use, a practice known as benchmarking.)

What we found:

- Energy efficiency was responsible for 35 percent of the emissions drop;
- Switching to cleaner fuels contributed 25 percent, and
- A cleaner grid accounted for another 40 percent.

“Data is foundational to the most effective public policies,” said John Mandyck, CEO of Urban Green. “This 10-year data set not only guides NYC’s climate approach, it can inform decisions in other cities so we can get to a low carbon future faster,” says **John Mandyck, CEO of Urban Green Council**.

“This report is a monument to our city’s progress and a call to action for us to work harder and faster to lower harmful emissions while we prioritize a healthy future for all frontline communities in New York City.” says **Mark Chambers, Director of NYC Mayor’s Office of Sustainability**.

The report notes that while building emissions have been falling at an encouraging rate, that pace has recently slowed. If these trends continue, buildings will miss the city’s goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 80 percent from 2005 levels by 2050.

However, recent legislation such as NYC’s groundbreaking Local Law 97, which sets tough emissions caps on buildings, and Local Law 33, which requires buildings to post their energy efficiency grades, will help spur greater reductions. The report provides a preview of the impact of these laws and the breakdown of how the various sectors are doing so far.

The report also found that multifamily buildings built after the first energy code took effect in 2010 use half as much energy as those built before 1980—suggesting that code compliance has helped new buildings use far less fuel than their predecessors. Advancements in building technology contributed to this trend, but these dramatic improvements illustrate that code development, education and enforcement are well worth the effort.

“Carrier is proud to support this research that provides greater visibility on where to drive energy and environmental performance in buildings,” says **Korinti Recalde, Sr. Director, Social Impact, Carrier**, whose support helped make this report possible.

New York City has collected information on the energy and water use of a majority of its large buildings for the past 10 years, providing New Yorkers with a decade’s worth of data to investigate trends in energy use and the effects of regulations and initiatives targeted toward this sector. The report is part of this decade-long effort to better evaluate and manage energy use in buildings, which contribute nearly 67 percent of the city’s greenhouse gas emissions—and large and midsize buildings account for half of those emissions. New York City’s benchmarked data represents 3 billion square feet and is the largest dataset of its kind in the nation.

With a decade of data in hand, this report is NYC’s sixth benchmarking report and is significant for containing a series of firsts:

- the first dive into benchmarking data from midsize buildings;
- the first trend analysis of 10 years of benchmarked energy use and emissions in NYC;
- the first summary of the results of NYC’s Energy Efficiency Grades, posted in buildings this year;
- and a preview of what’s needed to comply with the building emissions law in 2024.

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Urban Green Council’s mission is to transform buildings for a sustainable future in New York City and around the world.

We focus on buildings because they account for 67 percent of the city’s carbon emissions. We **convene** stakeholders to seek consensus; we **research** solutions that drive change locally and globally; we **advocate** for cutting-edge policy; and we **educate** a broad range of industry professionals. www.urbangreencouncil.org