Memorandum of Support

S.841 (Biaggi)

Purpose:
Requires petroleum bulk storage facilities to paint their tanks white or beige/cream.

Statement of Support:
As New York’s Climate Law dictates that we phase out all fossil fuel use over the next 30 years, we must do everything we can in the interim to reduce emissions from existing fossil fuel facilities. While we aspire to have a carbon neutral society by 2050, New York may still have to maintain petroleum bulk storage facilities for gasoline and home heating oil for the next decade or more, until electric cars and geothermal heating render them obsolete.

What we do know is that venting petroleum bulk storage facilities contribute significantly to hazardous air pollution, and the rate of those emissions increases significantly on hot sunny days when there is greater vapor pressure within the tanks. The external paint color of a petroleum bulk storage tank significantly affects the temperature of the tank's metal. The darker the color, the greater the emissions. Studies have shown a nearly 300% decrease in evaporation losses when tanks are painted white over darker colors. And because so many bulk petroleum facilities are sited near low income residential neighborhoods and communities of color, corporations have believed they can get away with not painting dark, rust colored tanks that pollute more. It is time to put an end to this specific form of environmental racism.

S.841 will require all above-ground petroleum storage tanks be painted white or beige to minimize sunlight absorption and, ultimately, reduce the emission of hazardous air pollutants. This is a low-cost and simple way to protect the health and safety of New Yorkers as we attempt to phase out all bulk storage petroleum facilities by 2050.

The Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter urges your support of S.841