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City Council Pushes TLC To Introduce Environmentally Friendly Taxis

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Some City Council members are pushing for environmentally friendly taxis to hit the streets.

Members of the council's Transportation Committee, environmental advocates, and automakers showed off some possibilities Wednesday afternoon at City Hall.

The Taxi and Limousine Commission has to give a portion of its taxi medallions to clean-air vehicles, but it has yet to approve a model. The Transportation Committee is trying to pass legislation which would force the TLC to pick one of the hybrid models already available.

"We can't continue to accept the excuse that this kind of vehicle, which is on the market, is not comfortable because there is not enough leg space," said Councilman John Liu, chairman of the Transportation Committee. "As we will all demonstrate, there is plenty of leg space in a vehicle like this."

"Hybrids can also slash global warming pollution here in New York City. If we converted the entire fleet to hybrids, that would be the equivalent of taking 24,000 cars off the road," said NRDC senior lawyer Mark Izeman.

The TLC tells NY1 that it "is committed to developing the best vehicles for use as New York City taxicabs and providing a better riding experience for passengers, and we are pleased that this legislation embraces that commitment."

There are a total of 13,000 taxis in New York City, and most are Ford Crown Victoria's. Even the latest model gets 19 miles per gallon, while hybrid models are far more fuel efficient.