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The Electric School Bus Pilot Program

Diesel school buses emit pollutants that kids breathe into their developing lungs. These pollutants are carcinogenic, cause respiratory illnesses, and aggravate asthma. School boards and elected officials must put the health of Maryland's youth and communities first by transitioning the state's school bus fleet to clean, zero-emission electric school buses.

How do zero-emission schools buses protect Maryland's children?

Every day, more than 650,000 children in Maryland ride to school on one of the state's approximately 7,200 diesel school buses. Every year, school buses in Maryland travel more than 128 million miles. These buses are a significant source of toxic air pollution, much of which is emitted around young children with still-developing lungs that make them more vulnerable to harmful pollution.

Studies have shown that diesel pollutants concentrate inside a bus cabin, increasing children's exposure. **A child riding inside of a diesel school bus may be exposed to as much as 15 times the level of toxic diesel exhaust as someone riding in a car.** Diesel emissions are filled with carcinogens, particulate matter, and soot that increase the lifetime risk of cancer, asthma, and heart disease.

Nearly one in ten Maryland children suffer from asthma, and this rate is higher among minority groups. Asthma is a leading chronic illness among children in the United States, and it is also one of the leading causes of school absenteeism. Children riding in zero emission buses experience reduced exposure to air pollution, less pulmonary inflammation, more rapid lung growth over time, and lower absenteeism compared to children riding in diesel buses.

Diesel emissions are filled with carcinogens, particulate matter, and soot.

Diesel school buses also harm the environment. Diesel school buses are a major source of greenhouse gas emissions; each bus emits about 27 tons of CO_2 per year—**6 times as much as an average car.** Nitrogen oxides, a major constituent of diesel exhaust, contribute to ozone pollution, smog, and acid rain.

Diesel school buses are a major source of greenhouse gas emissions.

Support HB0696–The Electric School Bus Pilot Program

In Maryland, Montgomery County, Frederick County, Howard County, and Prince George's County already own (or plan to own) and operate electric school buses. Now, HB0696 would provide the opportunity to expand the benefits of electric school buses in these school districts and beyond to every school system in Maryland within the territory of an investor-owned utility.

What HB0696 would do

HB0696 creates an Electric School Bus Pilot Program. School districts in each utility service area will be eligible to purchase zero-emission electric buses rather than diesel ones **at no additional cost to the school districts.** Investor-owned utilities may recover reasonable costs of the pilot program through a ratepayer adjustment.

Each investor-owned utility that implements the program will provide rebates to school districts for a minimum of 25 electric buses; the rebates are capped at $50 million during the pilot program, which will run 3-5 years. The utility, in consultation with participating school districts, will provide annual reports on the environmental, health, and other costs and benefits of the program to the General Assembly, the Governor, and the Public Service Commission.

What about the costs?

The program ensures there are **no additional capital, administrative, or operational costs to the school system.** Savings can instead go to educational programs, teachers' salaries, and assistance to students.

Lower costs of operating and maintaining electric buses have made them **financially attractive for schools.** One estimate puts the cost of operating electric school buses at about 19 cents per mile, compared to the 82 cents per mile cost of diesel buses.

Vehicle-to-grid technology uses bus batteries to provide electricity to the grid when it is needed to stabilize imbalances and meet peak demands. **School buses are ideally suited** for this function, as they are equipped with very large batteries and operate for small parts of the day. In the summer, when electricity demand is at its highest, most school buses do not operate at all.

School bus routes are typically less than 40 miles; today's electric school buses can travel 120 miles or more on a single charge. (For some buses, a charge takes only three hours.)

For additional information, please contact: Ramon Palencia-Calvo at **rpcalvo@mdlcv.org**

To support this legislation, please go to
www.mdlcv.org/action-alert/support-clean-buses-for-healthy-ninos

The Electric School Bus Pilot Program, sponsored by Delegate David Fraser-Hidalgo, is a no-lose proposition that would provide health & educational benefits to our students and improve the environment for all Marylanders.