

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2011 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 308 (Delegate Kaiser, *et al.*)
Environmental Matters

**Maryland Department of Transportation - Study of Feasibility of Requiring the
Use of Electric and Electric-Hybrid School Buses**

This bill requires the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) to study the feasibility of requiring that electric and electric-hybrid school buses be used to transport students enrolled in State public schools. MDOT must consult with and enlist the participation of a wide range of interested stakeholders. MDOT must submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly by December 31, 2011.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2011, and terminates May 31, 2012.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) expenditures increase by \$40,000 in FY 2012 to complete the required study and report. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
SF Expenditure	40,000	0	0	0	0
Net Effect	(\$40,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Note:() = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate effect

Local Effect: The bill is not anticipated to have a significant impact on local finances.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law: Under current regulations, which apply to local school systems that provide transportation services for public school students and specified students with disabilities, a local school system is responsible for the safe operation of its student transportation system and must conform to applicable federal and State regulations, procedures, and guidelines. Except under specified conditions, Type I or Type II school vehicles must be used to transport students to and from school and school-related activities when local school system-sponsored transportation services are provided.

A “school vehicle” is any motor vehicle that is used regularly for the exclusive transportation of children, students, or teachers for educational purposes or in connection with a school activity and is either a “Type I school vehicle” or a “Type II school vehicle,” with specified exceptions. A “Type I school vehicle” is designed and constructed to carry passengers and is either of the body-on chassis type construction or the integral type construction. It has a gross vehicle weight (GVW) exceeding 15,000 pounds and provides at least 13 inches of seating space per passenger. A Type I school vehicle does not include any bus operated by a common carrier under the jurisdiction of a State, regional, or federal regulatory agency or operated by the agency itself. A “school bus” is a Type I school vehicle. A “Type II school vehicle” is defined in a similar manner, except that it has a GVW of 15,000 pounds or less and does not exclude buses operated by common carriers under the jurisdiction of a State, regional, or federal regulatory agency or operated by the agency itself.

Background: According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), school buses transport 24 million children between their homes and classrooms. However, EPA advises that school buses, particularly older ones that lack emissions control devices, emit particles and toxic gases that can pose health hazards to children. EPA’s Clean School Bus USA Program works to reduce idling, retrofit buses with modern emission control technology, use cleaner fuels, and replace older school buses.

Because a typical school bus stops and starts frequently when picking up and dropping off students, it spends a significant amount of time stopped and idling. Due to concerns about both the economy and the environment, school systems across the country have shown a growing interest in acquiring fuel-efficient school buses in an effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and fuel consumption.

At this time, local jurisdictions in Maryland have not invested in electric-hybrid school buses and all electric school buses are not commercially available. Several states, including North Carolina, Iowa, and Kentucky, have received federal funding for electric-hybrid school buses. Numerous efforts are underway to better understand the costs and benefits associated with electric-hybrid school buses.

State Expenditures: TTF expenditures increase by approximately \$40,000 in fiscal 2012 for contractual services associated with completing the required report within a short time period and in collaboration with stakeholders. MDOT advises that a consultant is necessary, in part, because MDOT staff lacks expertise in this issue area.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education, Maryland Department of Transportation, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 10, 2011
mlm/lgc

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