



**Highland Electric Fleets, Inc.**

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**Testimony in OPPOSITION of House Bill 1360 - *School Bus Transition – Propane-Powered School Buses – Grant Program, Fund, and Purchase***

**Before the Maryland House Environment and Transportation Committee**

Chairman Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and members of the Maryland House Environment and Transportation Committee:

Highland Electric Fleets (“Highland,” “we”) is submitting this testimony in opposition to House Bill 1360, sponsored by Delegates Howard, Arentz, Hornberger, and Tomlinson.

The state of Maryland has taken significant steps towards school bus electrification, including the passage of HB1255, which established the Zero-Emission Vehicle School Bus Transition Program, and the Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022, which includes both an electric school bus (ESB) mandate and creates a pathway for future utility ESB incentive programs. These actions by the Maryland State Legislature have positioned Maryland as a leader in the transition to ESBs in the U.S.

Including propane-powered buses in the Zero-Emission Vehicle School Bus Transition Program, as proposed in HB1360, would contradict Maryland's existing goals. Emissions-free vehicles mean better air for students, drivers, and communities. ESBs also reduce maintenance costs and can help balance school districts' transportation budgets by switching to a predictable energy source provided by Maryland's *own* electric grid rather than a foreign fuel source.

In addition, on December 28, 2023, The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) released Maryland's Climate Pollution Reduction Plan, outlining a comprehensive framework to reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions by 60% by 2031, with a net-zero target by 2045. The plan underscores the urgency of transitioning a significant portion of Maryland's vehicle fleet, including school buses, to zero-emission models. HB1360 runs contrary to this goal as well.

Highland is the leading provider of electrification-as-a-service for school districts, governments, and fleet operators in North America. Founded in 2019, Highland offers a unique suite of products that make upgrading to electric fleets today simple and affordable. Active in 30 states and Canada, Highland is responsible for the first use of ESBs in a commercial V2G program and has the largest electric school bus project in the United States to date, in Montgomery County, Maryland (MCPS).



Through our partnership with MCPS, the school district fleet will deploy 326 ESBs over four years, putting the district on a path to 100% fleet electrification. MCPS demonstrates that electrification at scale is feasible today, even in the nation's largest fleets. In addition to Montgomery County, Highland also has a project in Baltimore City, where we are working with the school district to deploy 25 ESBs for which they received funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and in Baltimore County. These projects are made possible because Maryland school districts feel empowered by the state legislature to implement cleaner alternatives at their depots.

For these reasons, Highland urges an UNFAVORABLE report on this bill.

Sincerely,

Claire Alford  
Eastern Regional Manager, Market Development  
Highland Electric Fleets