



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Electric Bus Transition Act HB 432
Testimony of Delegate Marc Korman--Favorable

Thank you Mr. Chair, Mr. Vice Chair, and the members of the Environment and Transportation Committee. I come before you today to discuss the Electric Bus Transition Act. The legislation will transition the Maryland Transit Administration's (MTA) bus fleet to 100% electric over time. Starting in FY 2022, the bill will prohibit MTA from entering into new contracts to procure non-electric busses. Under the bill, MTA will be able to make the necessary but gradual switch over to clean electric energy without disrupting existing contracts and services.

The MTA operates Baltimore City's transit bus fleet, as well as 36 commuter bus routes around the state. In total, the MTA has a fleet of close to 800 buses. The Electric Bus Transition Act will take hundreds of diesel buses off the road over the next several years and will reduce emissions state-wide. The Hogan Administration has already indicated a desire to invest in more electric buses as a means to meet the state's emissions goals. In fact, the Governor's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act plan includes a goal of 50% MTA electric buses by 2030. The Electric Bus Transition Act is a more aggressive approach, but one that is necessary to meet Maryland's ambitious emissions reduction goals.

Electrification of bus fleets is already happening in the United States. There are over 2,100 electric buses in operation around the United States with many more on the way.¹ Several cities have already announced plans to significantly electrify their bus fleets. New York City currently operates 15 electric buses and plans to order over 500 more over the next five years.² In November 2019, the City of Los Angeles purchased 130 electric buses as an initial step in their goal to electrify city's entire fleet by 2030.³

¹ Fred Silver, John Jackson, and Bryan Lee, "Zeroing in on ZEBs: The Advanced Technology Transit Bus Index," calstart.org (CALSTART, October 17, 2019), https://calstart.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Zeroing_In_on_ZEBs_Final_10182018-10.21.19.pdf

² December 15, 2019, <http://www.mta.info/press-release/nyc-transit/mta-deploys-first-all-electric-articulated-bus-fleet-14th-street-busway>

³ Kyle Hyatt, "Los Angeles' Order of 130 Electric Buses Is the Largest in US History," Roadshow (CNET, November 14, 2019), <https://www.cnet.com/roadshow/news/los-angeles-bus-byd-largest-ever/>

To ensure that MTA remains on schedule to implement the transition, the bill mandates that starting in 2021, MTA must submit an annual report to the legislature that must include the following:

- An evaluation of the charging infrastructure needed for MTA to maintain an all-electric fleet;
- A plan for transitioning any workers adversely effected by the transition from diesel to electric buses to similar roles commensurate with seniority, pay and benefits within MDOT MTA;
- An estimate of the amount of carbon dioxide emissions that will not be emitted because of the use of electric buses each year until the transit bus fleet is converted to all-electric;
- A financial analysis of the projected cost of implementing and maintaining charging infrastructure; and
- A comparison of the projected cost of the all-electric bus fleet to the cost of continuing the legacy fleet.

I understand there may be some interest in defining the buses as “zero emissions,” rather than “electric.” I also understand that it may be necessary to clarify that the provision would not require the transition of locally operated transit service—such as the RideOn in Montgomery County—that MDOT may assist with procurement. Of course, those local services should also transition to zero emissions but that is not the purpose of the bill before you. I have requested amendments to address those issues which I will share with the Committee.

I also understand that the fiscal note may cause some concern, although it is my understanding that the Maryland Department of Transportation does not oppose the bill. The fiscal note figure is inflated because of the higher up-front costs of electric buses compared to diesel. There is ample evidence, however, that electric buses cost less over the life of the bus. A 2016 analysis from Columbia University on electric buses for New York City’s transit service found that the 12-year lifetime cost of an electric bus is approximately 12.5 percent lower than the cost of a diesel bus.⁴

The time to transition to zero emission transportation has come. I urge the Committee to support the Electric Bus Transition Act to ensure that Maryland becomes a leader in zero emissions vehicles and to achieve our ambitious emission reduction goals.

⁴ Aber, Judah. “Electric Bus Analysis for New York City Transit.” Electric Bus Analysis for New York City Transit, Columbia University, May 2016