



TO: House Environment and Transportation
FROM: Mary Beth Tung – Director, MEA
SUBJECT: HB 1481 - Zero-Emission Electric School Vehicles - Inspections
DATE: March 6, 2020

MEA POSITION: Letter of Information

The proposed legislation will allow school busses that are also Zero-Emission Vehicles (ZEVs) to operate up to three years longer than conventional school busses, so long as they continue to meet motor vehicle safety standards.

ZEVs have an incremental cost above and beyond that of their conventional gasoline or diesel fueled competitors. However, the State has several initiatives already in place to mitigate these costs and promote the further adoption of ZEVs. Some of the state programs, like this bill, target segments other than light-duty personal use vehicles. Allowing the ZEV vehicles to remain in use for a longer duration mitigates the increased cost by extending the timeline for which the benefits of the purchase may accrue. As ZEV technology advances and the incremental costs decrease, the longer horizon and lower fuel cost may allow for the total lifecycle costs to actually be lower for ZEV school busses in comparison to their gasoline and diesel counterparts. MEA, however, notes that this is not currently the case.

Additionally, there may be an additional policy reason to allow ZEVs to remain in school bus fleets for a longer period of time. Generally speaking, ZEVs have fewer moving parts, and may require less maintenance in the latter stages of their useful life. Again, MEA notes that because these technologies are still developing at a rapid pace (including battery technologies and hydrogen fuel cells), that current reliability figures may not fully reflect this apparent benefit of simplicity.

The Maryland Energy Administration requests that you take this information into account while deliberating the merits of House Bill 1481.