



7338 Baltimore Ave  
Suite 102  
College Park, MD 20740

**Committee:** Ways and Means

**Testimony on:** HB 1451 – “School Bus Purchasing – Zero-Emission Vehicle – Requirement”

**Position:** Support

**Hearing Date:** March 4, 2020

The Maryland Sierra Club strongly supports HB 1451. This bill would require that, beginning on October 1, 2023, all school buses purchased by county school boards be zero-emission vehicles, meaning vehicles that do not produce any tailpipe or evaporative emissions and have not been altered from the manufacturer’s original specifications. The bill also would require that, beginning on October 1, 2026, all school buses purchased by individuals under a transportation services contract with a county school board be zero-emission vehicles.

By initiating the transition to electric school buses, Maryland would reduce the extremely harmful effects of diesel pollutants on children. Over 640,000 kids in Maryland take one of the more than 7,000 diesel school buses to school every day. Studies have shown that diesel pollutants concentrate inside bus cabins, exposing children to four 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, and incidents of asthma and heart disease, and are especially dangerous to children, whose lungs, hearts, and other organs are still developing.

Zero emission school buses also would make good economic sense for Maryland. Each electric school bus can save districts nearly \$2,000 a year in fuel and \$4,400 a year in reduced maintenance costs, saving tens of thousands of dollars over the lifetime of a bus. Though their initial cost is higher, the long term economic, health and environmental benefits of electric school buses far outweigh any rationale for continuing to use diesel school buses.

In summary, this bill would begin the transition away from dirty diesel school buses, which would be good for our children, communities, school districts and the environment. We strongly urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on this legislation.

Brian Ditzler  
Madeleine Green  
Chapter Transportation Committee  
mvgreen@mcdonogh.org

Josh Tulkin, Chapter Director  
Josh.Tulkin@MDSierra.org  
Lindsey Mendelson, Transportation Lead

Founded in 1892, the Sierra Club is America’s oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization. The Maryland Chapter has over 70,000 members and supporters, and the Sierra Club nationwide has approximately 800,000 members.