



Committee: Economic Matters
Testimony on: HB0334 - Public Utilities – Electric School Bus Pilot Program
Organization: Climate Justice Wing of the Maryland Legislative Coalition
Submitting: Laurie McGilvray
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: February 18, 2021

Dear Mr. Chairman and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support of HB0832. The Maryland Legislative Coalition’s Climate Justice Wing, a statewide coalition of over 50 grassroots and professional organizations, urges you to vote favorably on HB0832. The bill will establish an electric school bus pilot program; authorize electric utility companies to apply to the Public Service Commission to implement the program; authorize electric companies to recover certain costs; and require participating electric companies to submit an annual report. School systems in each utility service area will be eligible to purchase zero-emission electric buses at no additional cost, because participating investor-owned electric utilities will cover the incremental cost. These utilities will provide rebates for a minimum of 25 electric buses not to exceed \$50 million during the pilot program.

Transportation, Climate Change, and Health

Transportation is one of the largest contributors of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Maryland. In order to reduce the impacts of climate change, Maryland must rapidly reduce its GHG emissions. Electrification of the approximately 7,200 school bus fleet is an essential strategy in achieving necessary GHG emission reduction. Additionally, most school buses are diesel-powered. Diesel fuel is more polluting than gasoline, thus exposing children and communities to even more toxic emissions and exacerbating rates of asthma, especially among children.

Benefits of School Bus Electrification

Some electric school buses are being planned or already being deployed in Montgomery County, Frederick County, Howard County and Prince George’s County as the counties work to electrify their school bus fleets. HB832 provides the opportunity to accelerate these efforts already underway and to expand the benefits of electric school buses to every school system in Maryland within the territory of an investor-owned utility. The proposed pilot program will ensure there are no capital, administrative, or operational costs to school systems. Additionally, each participating school system can expect to see cost savings each year from electric buses and can use these dollars for educational programs, teachers, and students.

For these reasons we urge a favorable vote for HB0832.