

Justin Gallardo
SB0137
Favorable
January 28, 2021

Testimony on SB0137
Maryland Transit Administration - Zero-Emission Bus Transition Act
Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for receiving this testimony in support of SB0137, Zero-Emission Bus Transition Act. I am a former employee of Shuttle UM at the University of Maryland, College Park. Not only did I serve commuters who depended on public transit – I myself depended on it as I was attending school and even after graduation while working for the transportation department. I had little disposable income that preventing me from purchasing an automobile. I had other priorities like paying off student loans. Quality public transit is a cornerstone of having a functioning regional economy, ensuring clean air, reducing impact on public health, and reducing our impact on global climate change.

SB0137 is an incremental bill that would force MTA to purchase contracts with Zero-Emission buses starting FY 2023. This bill provides guidelines and will not interrupt or impede on services. Our tax dollars should go to toward economic efficiency and not adversely harming the residents of the region – this is a wonderful start!

As a former resident of Prince George’s County and employee of UMD, I witnessed air pollution and its adverse harm during the summer months. This was associated with diesel emissions and the burning of fossil fuels. It made it harder to breathe while I was doing my job forcing me to wear a mask. Between the excessive heat and the air pollution – it was unbearable. Where there are major corridors, there is a major chance of being adversely impacted by pollution associated with the burning of fossil fuels for public transit services, ultimately disproportionately affecting low-income residents and people of color. It is evident along the US-1 corridor in Prince George’s County as well as the Baltimore region. We can have a thriving economy with reasonable legislation to combat negative externalities – this bill would do such. Human health and economic productivity should not be mutually exclusive!

In my lifetime, I want a future with economic prosperity, good health to all Americans, and limited impact on our global climate; therefore, I urge a favorable report of SB0137.

Sincerely,
Justin Gallardo