



**Testimony in SUPPORT of *Senate Bill 137 – Maryland Transit Administration
– Conversion to Zero-Emission Buses (Zero-Emission Bus Transition Act)*
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs and Budget and Taxation
January 28, 2021**

The Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington (JCRC) serves as the public affairs and community relations arm of the Jewish community. We represent over 100 Jewish organizations and synagogues throughout Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. The JCRC is strongly committed to cultivating a society based on freedom, justice, and pluralism. We work tirelessly throughout the entire Greater Washington area to advocate for our agencies that serve the most vulnerable residents, support our Jewish day schools and community centers, and to campaign for important policy interests on behalf of the entire Jewish community.

In Genesis 2:15, G-d commands us to “till and tend” the earth, commonly interpreted as instruction to watch over and protect our environment. G-d has given us Earth and it is our responsibility to take care of it for the short time each of us is here. The JCRC has a long history of favoring policies which protect the environment and reverse climate change.

Senate Bill 137 prohibits the Maryland Transit Administration from entering into a contract to purchase buses for the Administration’s State transit bus fleet that are not zero-emission buses beginning in fiscal year 2023. This bill aligns with the JCRC’s belief that every person has the fundamental and inalienable right to a healthful environment, including the right to a stable climate, clean air, water and land, and the preservation, protection and enhancement of ecological, scenic and historic values of the environment.

The JCRC supports SB 137 in that it directly addresses our current climate crisis. Zero-emission buses will help improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gasses. For these reasons, we ask the committees to give a favorable report on SB 137.