

**Committee: Environment and Transportation**

**Testimony on: HB334 “Conversion to Zero-Emission Buses – Zero-Emission Bus Transition Act”**

**Position: Support**

**Hearing Date: February 12, 2021**

Climate Law & Policy Project strongly urges a favorable report on HB334. HB334 would significantly reduce Maryland’s emissions of greenhouses gases (GHGs) and hazardous air pollutants, such as particulate matter, nitrogen oxides, and carbon monoxide.

Specifically, the bill would require a phase-in of electric buses for the Maryland Transit Administration’s (MTA’s) bus fleet by prohibiting MTA from purchasing any non-electric buses beginning in fiscal year 2023. The bill specifies several important measures to implement this change-over, including, notably, a requirement for development of a plan for transitioning any state workers adversely affected by the change-over to similar roles with commensurate seniority, pay, and benefits.

In addition, MTA would be required to annually report to the General Assembly an evaluation of the necessary charging infrastructure, an estimate of the reduction in CO2 emissions through the use of electric buses each year until the transit bus fleet is converted to all-electric, and a financial analysis of the projected costs of the conversion to battery-powered electric buses.

The transportation sector is Maryland’s number one generator of climate-damaging greenhouse gas emissions and contributes substantially to other toxic pollutants. More than 80% of Marylanders live in counties that do not meet federal clean air standards for ozone, due in significant part to tailpipe emissions.

Diesel buses, are significant sources of these pollutants. Diesel exhaust contains more than 40 toxic air contaminants that in some cases can cause and/or worsen diseases such as asthma and cancer. Communities of color and low- income neighborhoods face higher health risks due to poor air quality, specifically related to particulate matter emissions. Currently, there are approximately 775 buses in MTA’s fleet. As these buses are retired, it makes eminent sense to replace them with zero-emission buses.

Studies have shown electric buses are more cost-efficient in the long term than diesel buses because of their lower operational costs. Electricity that must be generated to charge electric bus batteries increasingly is coming from renewable wind and solar power sources, but even with the current generation mix, zero-emission buses are far cleaner and emit much less GHGs.

New York City and California has committed to fully electrifying their bus fleets by 2040. The Central Maryland Regional Transit Plan currently calls for a 95% of buses in the region to be zero emission by 2045. This bill is consistent with the goals of this plan.

We would offer one suggestions for improving HB334. As written, it is not certain that electric-drive buses with diesel generators would be excluded. We recommend the bill be clarified to unambiguously exclude buses with diesel generators.

With or without this change, Climate Law & Policy Project supports HB334 and urges a favorable report.