



**Testimony in Support of House Bill 334 (Delegate Korman)
Maryland Transit Administration – Conversion to Zero-Emission Buses
(Zero-Emission Bus Transition Act)
FAVORABLE**

February 12, 2021

Dear Chair Barve, Chair McIntosh, Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee, and Members of the Appropriations Committee:

On behalf of Strong Future Maryland, we write in strong support of House Bill 334. Strong Future Maryland works to advance bold, progressive policy changes to address systemic inequality and promote a sustainable, just and prosperous economic future for all Marylanders. We implore you to support this legislation as part of the broader, audacious mandate for climate consideration and sustainable transit favored by the people of Maryland.

The support and eventual passage of HB 334 into law would prohibit the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) from using state funding to purchase buses that are not zero-emission vehicles by 2023. Currently, the fleet of [over 800 buses services over 81 million Maryland residents yearly](#), as of 2015, with major routes linking Baltimore to Washington D.C. and surrounding counties. Maintaining and expanding our state's robust network of bus systems is a vital precursor to connecting communities to employment opportunities, especially in low-income areas, and broadens pathways for more equitable medical, educational and food/grocery access. Given the impact of Covid-19 on not only personal finances, but vulnerable small businesses, food providers, and retailers who have been forced to shutter their doors, we must continue to pursue a recovery that prioritizes equity, sustainability, and safety in transit.

The environmental impacts of longstanding mass transit systems cannot be ignored. [The Union of Concerned Scientists](#) found that while mass-transit vehicles only account for about 5% of all vehicles, they produce more than 25% of emissions and pollution that threaten communities disproportionately impacted by decades of environmental injustice from compromised air quality. These happen to be many of the same communities with COVID-19 inequities. **Study after study has concluded that the switch to electric buses will dramatically reduce carbon emission levels at a much more rapid pace than the more gradual transition individual households make to purchase electric vehicles.** Plus, the [long-term costs of traditional diesel buses](#) far exceeds those of purchasing and maintenance electric buses; this bill will save Marylanders tax dollars in the future.

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As a member of the coalition of [15 bold states and the District of Columbia](#) that have launched efforts to transition to state-funded zero-emission transit, HB 334 will place Maryland at the forefront of the national movement towards clean energy and jumpstart critical post-Covid-19 economic revitalization through infrastructural investments. The early results of zero-emission busing have been promising -- an [April 2020 evaluation](#) of Long Beach, California's conversion to an electric bus fleet experienced a 19% decrease in maintenance costs, \$0.18 saved per mile in fuel costs, and much more efficient fuel economies.

The road to cleaner energy, long term cost savings, and a more efficient transit system is paved in HB 334. For all of these reasons, we urge a favorable report.

John B. King Jr.
Founder and Board Chair

Alice Wilkerson
Executive Director