



Environment Committee

Committee: Environment and Transportation
Testimony on: HB0334 - Maryland Transit Administration – Conversion to Zero-Emission Buses (Zero-Emission Bus Transition Act)
Organization: Takoma Park Mobilization Environment Committee
Submitting: Laurie McGilvray
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: February 12, 2021

Dear Mr. Chairman and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support of HB0334. The Takoma Park Mobilization (TPM) is a grassroots organization based in Takoma Park, Montgomery County and focused on state and local climate change issues. The TPM Environment Committee urges you to vote favorably on HB0334. The bill will prohibit the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) from entering into a contract to purchase buses for the State fleet that are not zero-emission buses beginning in fiscal year 2023, and will require an annual report to include a schedule for converting the State transit fleet to exclusively zero-emission buses, an evaluation of necessary charging infrastructure, a plan for transitioning adversely affected State employees, an estimate of the potential emission reductions, and analysis of projected costs.

Bus Transit and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Goals

Transportation comprises one of the largest sources of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (e.g., 42% in Montgomery County). Electrification of buses is a key strategy for Maryland to meet its GHG reduction goals and for Montgomery County to meet its even more ambitious goals of 80% GHG emission reduction by 2027 and 100% by 2035. While Montgomery County operates the local RideOn bus system, MTA operates commuter buses that run within the County. Conversion of the MTA commuter bus fleet to zero-emission buses would go a long way to helping the County and the State reduce GHG emissions.

Benefits Outweigh Costs of Bus Electrification

Although purchasing electric buses is more expensive in the short-term, there are a number of longer-term benefits. First, electric buses have lower operation and maintenance costs, thus compensating for the cost differential over time. Second, electrifying public buses would improve public health through reduced air pollution and increase jobs in the growing EV infrastructure sector.

For these reasons we urge a favorable vote for HB0334.