



Environment Committee

Committee: Finance Committee
Testimony on: HB0832 - Public Utilities – Electric School Bus Pilot Program
Organization: Takoma Park Mobilization Environment Committee
Submitting: Laurie McGilvray
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: March 30, 2021

Dear Mr. Chairman and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support of HB0832. 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 HB0832. The bill will establish an electric school bus pilot program; authorize electric utility companies to apply to the Public Service Commission to implement the program; authorize electric companies to recover certain costs; and require participating electric companies to submit an annual report. School systems in each utility service area will be eligible to purchase zero-emission electric buses at no additional cost, because participating investor-owned electric utilities will cover the incremental cost. These utilities will provide rebates for a minimum of 25 electric buses not to exceed \$50 million during the pilot program.

Transportation, Climate Change, and Health

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. Electrification of the Maryland's approximately 7,200 school bus fleet (1,300 school buses in Montgomery County alone) is an essential strategy in achieving necessary GHG emission reduction. Additionally, most school buses are diesel-powered. Diesel fuel is more polluting than gasoline, thus exposing children and communities to even more toxic emissions and exacerbating rates of asthma, especially among children.

Benefits of School Bus Electrification

Some electric school buses are already being deployed in several Maryland counties (e.g., Montgomery, Frederick, Howard, and Prince George's Counties) as they work to electrify their school bus fleets. We are very excited about the deployment of over 300 electric buses in Montgomery County alone. HB0832 provides the opportunity to accelerate these efforts and to expand the benefits of electric school buses to every school system in Maryland within the territory of an investor-owned utility. The proposed pilot program will ensure there are no capital, administrative, or operational costs to school systems. Additionally, each participating school system can expect to see cost savings each year from electric buses and can use these dollars for educational programs, teachers, and students.

For these reasons we urge a favorable vote for HB0832.