



Committee: Economic Matters

Testimony on: HB696 - Public Utilities - Electric School Bus Pilot Program

Organization: MLC Climate Justice Wing

Submitting: Diana Younts, Co-Chair

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: February 10, 2022

Dear Mr. Chairman and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today. The MLC Climate Justice Wing, a statewide coalition of over 50 grassroots and professional organizations, urges you to vote favorably on HB0696.

HB0696 creates an Electric School Bus Pilot Program. Under the program, school districts in each utility service area will be eligible to purchase zero-emission electric buses rather than diesel ones. The program ensures there are no additional capital, administrative, or operational costs to the school system. And with vehicle-to-grid electric school buses that can serve as back up batteries and service the electric grid, school districts could even save money. Savings can instead go to educational programs, teachers' salaries, and assistance to students.

Diesel Bus Fumes Harm Our Children. Twice a day, five days a week, the children of Maryland must breathe in high concentrations of diesel fumes to get to and from school. A child riding inside of a diesel school bus may be exposed to as much as 15 times as many pollutants than kids not riding a diesel bus. The consequences are well understood. Diesel exhaust is carcinogenic, reduces lung function and increases asthma and pneumonia in children. Diesel tailpipes spew out more than 40 toxic substances, smog-forming nitrogen oxides and black sooty particulate matter, which lodges deep in children's lungs, creating life-threatening health problems. Children are most at risk because their lungs are still developing, and they breathe two times more air per pound of body weight than adults do. The damage can result in permanently reduced lung function and lifelong health problems.

Diesel Buses Pollute. Diesel school buses harm the environment in a number of other ways. They are a major source of greenhouse gas emissions, each bus emitting about 24 tons of CO₂ per year—6 times as much as an average car. Nitrogen oxide, a major constituent of diesel exhaust, contributes to acid rain, ozone formation, and smog. Frequently, it is the most

vulnerable populations that are hit hardest by diesel and other toxic pollution. Environmental justice communities suffer higher rates of air pollution, are hospitalized more often for respiratory illnesses and are disproportionately impacted by climate change. In some environmental justice neighborhoods, 1 in 4 children has asthma.

The Electric School Bus Pilot Program is a no-lose proposition that would provide health and educational benefits to our students and improve the environment for all Marylanders.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.

MLC Climate Justice Wing:

Assateague Coastal Trust
Maryland Legislative Coalition
MD Campaign for Environmental Human Rights
Chesapeake Climate Action Network
WISE
Frack Free Frostburg
Mountain Maryland Movement

Howard County Indivisible
Howard County Sierra Club
Columbia Association Climate change and sustainability advisory committee
HoCo Climate Action
CHEER
Climate XChange - Maryland
Mid-Atlantic Field Representative/
National Parks Conservation Association
350 Montgomery County
Glen Echo Heights Mobilization
The Climate Mobilization Montgomery County
Montgomery County Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions
Montgomery Countryside Alliance
Takoma Park Mobilization Environment Committee
Audubon Naturalist Society
Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church
Environmental Justice Ministry
Coalition For Smarter Growth

DoTheMostGood Montgomery County
MCPS Clean Energy Campaign
MoCo DCC
Potomac Conservancy
Casa de Maryland
Nuclear Information & Resource Service
Clean Air Prince Georges
Laurel Resist
Greenbelt Climate Action Network
Maryland League of Conservation Voters
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland
Concerned Citizens Against Industrial Cafos
Wicomico NAACP
Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility
Chispa MD
Climate Law & Policy Project
Maryland Poor Peoples Campaign
Labor for Sustainability
The Nature Conservancy
Clean Air Prince Georges
350 Baltimore
Maryland Environmental Health Network
Climate Stewards of Greater Annapolis
Talbot Rising
Adat Shalom Climate Action
Mid-Atlantic Earth Holders
Climate Parents of Prince Georges
Echotopia

Maryland NAACP State Conference,
Environmental Justice Committee