

SUPPORT
House Economic Matters
02/10/2022

House Bill 696 - Public Utilities – Transitional and Default Electric Service – Implementation

Baltimore Gas and Electric Company (BGE) strongly supports *House Bill 696 – Public Utilities - Electric School Bus Pilot Program*. House Bill 696 would establish an electric school bus pilot program, administered by the Maryland Public Service Commission (Commission), which would jumpstart the use of electric school buses by providing incentives to offset costs borne by school systems to deploy electric school buses and would also allow the energy stored in school bus batteries to be deployed to meet regional electricity demands when the buses are not in use for transportation needs.

Electric vehicle deployment contributes to many of the state’s environmental and transportation goals and deployment on school buses is among the most obvious platforms to advance the technology as these buses are usually located in centralized fleet locations where charging infrastructure can be effectively installed. Secondly, school buses have very defined routes with predictable usage and return to the central location on an established schedule, easing the ability to recharge the onboard batteries. Lastly, school buses are idle much of the time and the energy stored in their batteries can be deployed during times of electricity shortages or other emergencies. This is particularly true during extreme weather events in any season, when the buses likely will not be in use to transport students.

The program to be established by House Bill 696 will enable Investor-Owned electric companies to apply to the Commission to implement an electric school bus program which would provide rebates to participating school systems and also would allow the utility to use the energy stored in the school bus batteries when the buses are not in use during potential power outages and certain emergencies.

The Electric School Bus Pilot program will advance the use of electric vehicles, provide a benefit to participating school systems, and provide for additional electricity to be available to mitigate potential power outages. For these reasons BGE supports House Bill 696 and requests a favorable committee report.