



Olivia Bartlett, DoTheMostGood Maryland Team

Committee: Economic Matters

Testimony on: HB0696 – Public Utilities – Electric School Bus Pilot Program

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: February 10, 2022

Bill Contact: Delegate David Frasier-Hidalgo

DoTheMostGood (DTMG) is a progressive grass-roots organization with more than 3000 members across all districts in Montgomery County as well as a number of nearby jurisdictions. DTMG supports legislation and activities that keep residents healthy and safe in a clean environment and which promote equity across all our diverse communities. DTMG strongly supports HB0696 because riding in clean electric buses will result in healthier children in Maryland and reduce greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change.

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 in a diesel school bus may be exposed to 15 times as many pollutants as 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 and black sooty particulate matter, which lodges deep in children’s lungs, creating life-threatening health problems. Children are most at risk from diesel fumes because their lungs are still developing and they breathe two times more air per pound of body weight than adults do. Damage from diesel fumes can result in permanently reduced lung function and lifelong health problems.

Diesel buses also pollute our air and contribute to global warming. Diesel school buses harm the environment in a number of ways. They are a major source of greenhouse gas emissions, with each bus emitting about 24 tons of CO2 per year— 6 times more than an average car. Nitrous oxide, a major constituent of diesel exhaust, contributes to acid rain, ozone formation, and smog. Frequently, our most vulnerable populations 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.

HB0696 addresses these serious problems by creating 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 busses. The program ensures there are no additional capital, administrative, or operational costs to the school system. In addition, 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 that could be used for educational programs, teachers' salaries, and assistance to students.

The Electric School Bus Pilot Program is a win-win proposition that will provide health and educational benefits to our students and improve the environment for all Marylanders. Therefore, DTMG strongly supports HB0696 and urges a **FAVORABLE** report on this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

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