



**TESTIMONY FOR HB0636
PUBLIC UTILITIES – ELECTRIC SCHOOL BUS PILOT PROGRAM**

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Fraser-Hidalgo

Committee: Economic Matters

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0636 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

This bill creates an Electric School Bus Pilot Program that will be paid for by Maryland's utility companies. School systems in each utility service area will be eligible to purchase zero-emission electric buses rather than diesel ones at no additional cost to the school system. While the utility will cover the "incremental cost" and provide the charging infrastructure, savings from operating and maintaining the buses may be retained by the school system. In exchange, the utility companies will be able to utilize the storage batteries in each school bus to access the stored electricity through vehicle-to-grid technology.

Each utility will allow for purchase a minimum of 25 electric buses and can spend up to \$50 million during the pilot program, which will run 3-5 years. The utility, in consultation with participating school systems, will provide annual reports on the costs and benefits of the program to the General Assembly, the Governor and the Public Service Commission.

There are several reasons to do this. One is that school buses produce greenhouse gases, and they should be replaced with zero-emission buses in order to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions in Maryland. Additionally, school bus exhaust pipes are right at nose level for most of the children that take the buses, and they are inhaling all of that exhaust every time they take the bus. This causes health problems for them starting at a very young age. We should work hard to get this situation turned around, and this proposal seems like a very positive way to solve the problem.

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