



SB-61 – Maryland Transit Administration - Conversion to Zero-Emission Buses (Zero-Emission Bus Transition Act Revisions)

Testimony before

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

February 15, 2022

Position: Favorable

Mr. Chair, Madame Vice Chair, and members of the committee, my name is Peter Alexander and I represent the 750+ members of Indivisible Howard County. IndivisibleHoCo is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members). We are providing written testimony today in **support of SB61**. We appreciate Senator Zucker's leadership in sponsoring this legislation.

During the 2021, the General Assembly passed legislation to transition the Maryland Transit Administration's (MTA) fleet of 800 buses to zero emission over time and we are glad to see that it was enacted. Maryland is becoming a leader in zero-emissions vehicles and is in a better position to meet our ambitious emission reduction goals. MTA has already started that transition with plans for procurement of the first zero emission buses. SB61 provides additional protections to ensure that MTA's bus workers are not negatively affected by the transition to zero-emission buses.

This bill does not alter the zero-emissions goal or timeline, but rather:

- Provides training for its maintenance crews to learn how to work on zero-emission buses, as well as the accompanying electric vehicle charging infrastructure.
- Establishes registered apprenticeships and other labor management training programs for transitioning workers.
- Ensures that no current duties of state employees are transferred to contractors in relation to the zero-emission bus transition.
- Requires any entity that operates or maintains a zero-emission bus on behalf of MTA to extend the same levels of protections for workers that MTA is required to.

The objective of this bill is to ensure that current MTA workers are not disproportionately harmed by the transition to more sustainable environmental solutions. **We can protect our people and our environment at the same time with provisions such as these.**

Bus operators and maintenance workers are integral to the success of Maryland's transit system. Now that Maryland has committed to the appropriate path of transitioning to zero-emission buses in order to protect the environment, the state must also protect the employees who have dedicated themselves to the operation of our transit buses. The timeline of the transition away from diesel buses provides adequate time in which the existing workforce can be trained in how to operate the new buses. Thank you for your consideration of this vital legislation.

We respectfully urge a favorable report.

Peter Alexander
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