



Kim Coble  
Executive Director

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2021 Board of  
Directors

SUPPORT: SB687: Zero-Emission Truck Act of 2022

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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Maryland LCV strongly supports SB687: Zero-Emission Truck Act of 2022, and we thank Senator Young for his leadership on this issue.

Maryland LCV works at the intersection of strong climate policy and environmental justice. This bill supports both of those interests.

In order to confront the growing threat of climate change, Maryland must continue to take bold steps to address the pollution coming from the transportation sector, which is the single largest contributor to our carbon emissions. Moving our state vehicles away from fossil fuel-reliant technologies and moving to zero-emission electric vehicles (which can be charged with clean, renewable energy) is critical to this effort. Trucks account for 10% of vehicles on the road, but contribute 30% of carbon emissions and 57% of particulate matter (PM2.5) emitted in the United States. People who are heavily exposed to PM2.5 and other toxic truck emissions like nitrogen oxides are at greater risk for developing asthma and many lung diseases like chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and lung cancer. Low income communities and communities of color disproportionately suffer the impacts of this diesel pollution.

Maryland LCV is especially invested in the inclusion of electric school buses in this legislation.

Every day over 650,000 children in Maryland ride to school on one of the State's approximately 7,200 diesel school buses. Every year, school buses in Maryland travel more than 128 million miles. Studies have shown that diesel pollutants concentrate inside a bus cabin, increasing children's exposure. A child riding inside of a diesel school bus may be exposed to as much as 15 times the level of toxic diesel exhaust as someone riding in a car. Diesel emissions are filled with carcinogens, particulate matter and soot that increases lifetime risk of cancer, incidents of asthma and heart disease. These effects are particularly dangerous for children because their lungs, heart, and other organs are still developing.

Children riding in zero-emission buses experience reduced exposure to air pollution, less pulmonary inflammation, more rapid lung growth over time and lower absenteeism compared to children riding in diesel buses, particularly those with asthma. In Maryland, approximately one in ten children suffer from asthma, and this rate is higher among minority groups. Asthma is a leading chronic illness among children in the United States, and it is also one of the leading causes of school absenteeism. In Maryland, 19.2 percent of parents reported that their child missed 1-2 days of school because of asthma and 9.7 percent said their child missed over seven days due to asthma.

Electric school buses are a proven technology. Here in Maryland, several school districts already have or are expecting to incorporate electric school buses to their fleets this year. Recent innovations, such as vehicle-to-grid (V2G) technology, coupled with the lower costs of operating and maintaining electric buses, have made them financially attractive for schools. One estimate puts the cost of operating electric school buses at about 19 cents per mile, compared to the 82 cents per mile cost of diesel buses.

The electrification of school buses has been a priority of Maryland LCV for many years, and is included in several important pieces of legislation this year, of which SB687 is one. This important bill works in concert with the provisions of the Climate Solutions Now Act (SB528) and the Electric School Bus Pilot Program (SB948).

Maryland LCV strongly urges a favorable report on this important bill.