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Appropriations Committee

Subcommittees

Capital Budget

Chair, Transportation and the
Environment

Oversight Committee on Personnel



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Zero-Emission Bus Transition Act Revisions (HB 10)
Testimony of Delegate Marc Korman—Favorable

Thank you Mr. Chair, Mr. Vice Chair, and the members of the Environment and Transportation Committee. I am here to present the Zero-Emission Bus Transition Act Revisions (HB 10). Last year, both the House and the Senate passed legislation I sponsored with Senator Craig Zucker to transition the Maryland Transit Administration's (MTA) fleet of 800 buses to zero emission over time. MTA has started that transition with an announcement last month about its plans and a procurement next week for some of the first zero emission buses before the Board of Public Works. The bill before you does no alter the zero emission goal or timeline.

What the new bill does is provide additional protections to ensure that MTA's bus workers are not negatively impacted by the transition to zero-emission buses. Frankly, we had hoped to have these provisions included last year but the timing of negotiations around the Climate Solutions Now Act prevented that from occurring.

The legislation requires MTA to:

- Provide training for its maintenance crews to learn how to operate on zero-emission buses, as well as the accompanying electric vehicle charging infrastructure.
- Establish registered apprenticeships and other labor management training programs for transitioning workers.
- Ensure that no current duties of state employees are transferred to contractors in relation to the zero-emission bus transition.
- Require 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.

Some of you will recognize provisions such as these as part of the “just transition,” the effort to ensure that 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.

I am grateful for the committee's support for the Zero-Emission Bus Transition Act last session. Because of your leadership, Maryland is on the way to becoming a leader in zero-emissions vehicles and is in a better position to meet our ambitious emission reduction goals. We can and should reaffirm our commitment to reducing emissions while also protecting transit workers. I urge a favorable report.

