



HB492 ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY – SCHOOL VEHICLES – DURATION OF OPERATION

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EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT

SUPPORT

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Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) supports **HB492 Anne Arundel County – School Vehicles – Duration of Operation**. This bill alters the number of years that a school vehicle may be operated in Anne Arundel County from 12 years to 15 years.

Local boards of education are responsible for providing funding for transportation to students within their school systems. Over the years, local school systems' responsibilities for transporting students have significantly increased due to additional costs associated with the transporting of special education, nonpublic placement, and homeless students as well as those students enrolled in magnet programs outside their designated school attendance area. Operational expenses associated with labor shortages have also contributed to increased expenditures.

The school vehicles owned and operated by AACPS and its independent contractors are exceptionally well built, maintained, and operated. These school vehicles are subject to regular inspections pursuant to rigorous industry standards to ensure their operational readiness and to ensure compliance with applicable safety standards in accordance with federal and State laws and regulations. Given this, there is no rationale for artificially limiting the service life of a modern day school vehicle to only 12 years of operation. In addition, this bill would align AACPS with 14 other school systems in Maryland which already operate school vehicles for 15 years as allowed under current law.

AACPS estimates that a new conventional school bus costs approximately \$130,000 to purchase. Spreading that fixed cost across 15 years in lieu of only 12 years yields 20% more value out of each school vehicle and this will ultimately result in considerable cost savings to the school system. AACPS supports consideration of all available revenue options to support Maryland's public schools.

Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** committee report on HB492.