



March 3, 2025

The Honorable Marc Korman and Members  
House Environment and Transportation Committee  
House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: **FAVORABLE – HB 1269 - School Bus Transition - Propane-Powered School Buses  
- Grant Program, Fund, and Purchase**

Dear Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland School Bus Contractors Association (MSBCA) **supports HB 1269 - School Bus Transition - Propane-Powered School Buses - Grant Program, Fund, and Purchase**. MSBCA serves as the voice of the private school bus companies that contract with local Maryland school systems in 19 of Maryland's 24 jurisdictions. MSBCA members own and operate over 3,500, or 49% of the school buses transporting school children across the great State of Maryland. MSBCA contracted school buses cover over 53 million miles each year while remaining fully committed to the safety of the students we transport and considers it a privilege to do so.

As you well know, we are facing major challenges transitioning to electric (EV) school buses as mandated by the Climate Solutions Now ACT of 2022. Some of those challenges include performance concerns for long rural routes, battery life and charging in cold weather, an unprepared electric grid infrastructure, the increasing cost of electricity but most importantly the cost of replacing each school bus. To meet the current mandate, it is projected that 500-600 EV school buses will need to be purchased each year.

But there are viable clean energy alternatives such as propane powered school bus. Basic important facts to give this bill a favorable report –

- Cost of 72 Passenger School Bus: **Propane \$146,000 vs. Electric \$388,000, a \$200,000 saving per bus**. See the recent bus manufacturer's representative quote attached.
- Infrastructure - Fuel Delivery: The delivery and refueling infrastructure for propane is already in place throughout all of Maryland.
- Infrastructure - Electrical Grid: This is a huge and likely costly unknown in Maryland, especially in our rural communities. Some other state's estimates for a 20-bus fleet are

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*MSBCA serves as the voice of the private school bus companies that contract with local Maryland school systems in 19 of Maryland's 24 jurisdictions to own and operate the nearly 3500 contracted school buses that transport schoolchildren across the State.*

\$80,000 - 300,000, but on-site bus owners/contractors that use propane merely need to add a fueling area to their locations for much, much less.

- **Refueling Time:** Propane is 96x faster. Propane 5-6 mins. vs. Electric 6-8 hours.
- **Range:** Propane Bus is 300 miles per 67-gallon tank vs. Electric 120 miles per charge. *In some cases, this means between fueling times and range you need 2 electric buses to operate that of just one propane bus.*
- **Elements:** Unlike batteries, propane is not affected by cold temperatures.
- **Environmental Impact: Propane school buses provide less carbon impact in the State of Maryland than electricity based on the current energy sources. Electric emits approximately 154 g/kW-h vs. Propane 78 g/kW-h.**

Please consider the ‘propane bridge’ related to school buses option to start lowering carbon emissions now as part of the Climate Solutions Act of 2022. Some of our MSBCA members are doing just that without support of grants like this bill proposes.

MSBCA asks that you consider the merits of HB 1269 related to school buses and our current state budget challenges. On January 22, 2025, Secretary of the Environment, Serena McIlwain noted in her briefing to this committee a need to postpone the EV mandates for transit vehicles to 2032. Even stating “school systems do not have that kind of money”. She is correct, we don’t. But we do have another option to bridge our climate needs now, that is propane powered school buses.

Again, MSBCA looks forward to working with the legislators to make Maryland the safest and most efficient state in the country for all our children.

Sincerely,

*Steve Nelson*

Steve Nelson

President

Maryland School Bus Contractors Association

15 School Circle

Annapolis, MD 21401

202-386-3859

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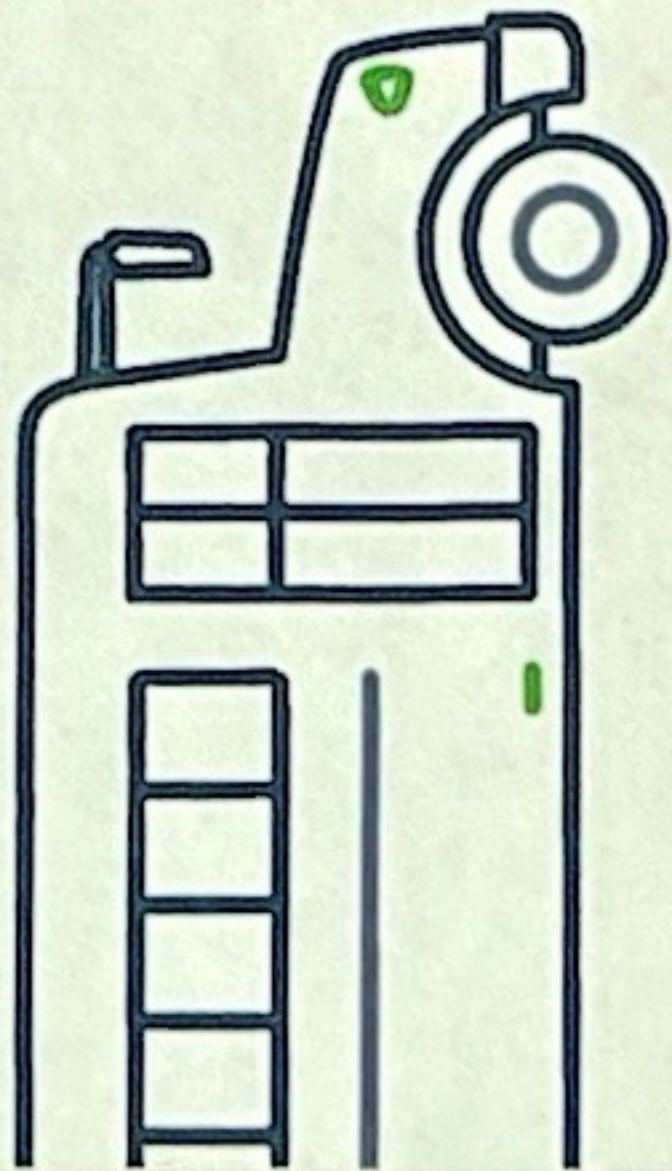
# Propane vs. Electric

Propane school buses cost less, travel further, fill up more quickly, and have a smaller carbon footprint than electric buses.

It's no wonder that school districts across America are making the switch to propane.

## Purchase Price

Propane buses cost one third the price of electric buses



Propane  
\$106,000

Electric  
\$350,000

## Refueling Time

Propane buses can fill up in a fraction of the time vs. electric



## Infrastructure

How much does it cost to build a new fueling or charging station for 20 buses?



Propane  
\$60-70K



Electric  
\$80-300K

## Range

Propane buses can drive more than twice as far as electric without refueling

Electric: Up to **120 miles** per charge



Propane: Up to **300 Miles** per 67-gallon tank

## Environmental Impact

Propane buses have a lower carbon intensity than electric buses

How much carbon is emitted for every unit of energy it produces? Remember: coal and natural gas are still America's primary sources of energy for electricity.

Propane  
78 g/kWh

Electric  
154 g/kWh



----- Forwarded Message -----

**From:** Gordon Dhue <gdhue@igburton.com>

**To:** nelsonbuscompany@verizon.net <nelsonbuscompany@verizon.net>

**Cc:** Wayne Dhue <wdhue@igburton.com>

**Sent:** Thursday, February 13, 2025 at 02:09:03 PM EST

**Subject:** Bus Pricing 72 Passenger MD buses

Good Afternoon,

The pricing for MD buses that are 72 passengers are as follows:

DIESEL - \$135,553

PROPANE - \$146,023

GAS - \$136,075

EV - \$388,791

These numbers do not include A/C. If you'd like to add A/C to an ICE unit then it will be an additional \$12,000.00. If you add A/C to the EV it'll be \$20,000.

These numbers do not include sales tax, tag, or title fees.

If you have any questions please let me know. My number is 410-443-6058.

Thanks

## Gordon Dhue

**Bus Sales**

**i.g. Burton Bus & Truck Center**

Mobile: 410-443-6058

gdhue@igburton.com

www.igburtonbuscenter.com



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