



Committee: Environment and Transportation

Testimony on: HB 1269- School Bus Transition - Propane-Powered School Buses - Grant Program, Fund, and Purchase

Position: Oppose

Hearing Date: March 5, 2025

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club opposes HB 1269. The bill would alter the Zero-Emission Vehicle School Bus Transition Grant Program to cover propane buses. The program currently provides grants for zero-emission school buses, charging infrastructure, and planning assistance to help school districts transition to zero-emission buses.

Subsidizing buses that run on fossil fuels would counter the purpose of the program, which is intended to reduce climate and toxic air pollution by providing school districts with resources to transition to buses that do not emit tailpipe pollution.

According to data from the U.S. Department of Energy's Argonne National Laboratory AFLEET tool, propane-burning school buses emit more carbon monoxide than diesel-burning school buses and just as many greenhouse gas emissions. Even when accounting for emissions generated from producing electricity, on average, electric school buses generate just half the greenhouse gas emissions of propane-burning and diesel-burning school buses.¹ Additionally, the benefits of electric school buses will grow over time as more clean renewable energy is added to the grid.

Electrifying school buses is also important to address inequitable exposure to pollution. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, 60% of low-income students take the bus to school compared to 45% of higher income students² and Asian American, Black, and Latino residents are exposed to substantially more air pollution from cars, trucks, and buses than other demographic groups.³

Electric school buses can also benefit school districts because they have lower costs of operation and maintenance than propane buses, as they have fewer components and much lower fuel costs.

We should be directing our resources to investing in clean electric buses instead of subsidizing propane buses that would move us in the wrong direction for our climate and health. For these reasons, we urge an unfavorable report on this legislation.

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¹ <https://electricschoolbusinitiative.org/clearing-air-emissions-propane-burning-school-buses>

² <https://www.bts.gov/topics/passenger-travel/back-school-2019>

³ <https://www.ucsusa.org/resources/inequitable-exposure-air-pollution-vehicles>