

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Signs Legislation Requiring Establishment of Electric School Bus Program

08/4/2022

Up to \$45 million over three years will fund the purchase of electric school buses and charging infrastructure across the state.

TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy today signed a bill (A1282) requiring the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to implement a three-year “Electric School Bus Program” to provide funding for the purchase of electric school buses and charging infrastructure across the state and to assess a variety of operational issues related to school bus electrification. The bill’s signing testifies to the Murphy Administration’s continued commitment to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, vehicle electrification, and the protection of children and families from harmful air pollutants, especially in environmental justice communities.

“In order to significantly cut greenhouse gas emissions and optimally capitalize on the benefits of vehicle electrification, we must electrify not just the cars that bring us to work, but the buses that safely deliver our children to school,” **said Governor Murphy**. “Some of the most important vehicles traversing our state’s roads and bridges are the buses connecting our children and families to our nation-leading public school system. It is our responsibility as elected officials to ensure that those vehicles do not adversely affect the health outcomes of our students as they grow, learn, and prepare to lead New Jersey toward a more sustainable future themselves.”

Through the Electric School Bus Program, the DEP will issue \$15 million in grants in Year One and up to \$15 million in Years Two and Three for a total of up to \$45 million over the course of the three-year program. Grants will be awarded to at least six school districts or bus contractors annually. In each year, at least half of the school districts or school bus contractors selected by the DEP – and at least half of the grant funding awarded by the DEP in each year – will be allocated to a low-income, urban, or environmental justice community in order to mitigate the disproportionate health impacts of medium- and heavy-duty vehicles on vulnerable populations.

Funding for the program can come from the Clean Energy Fund, the Global Warming Solutions Fund (Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative proceeds), monies available from utility programs to upgrade electrical infrastructure for vehicle charging, appropriations, or any other available funding. For Year One, the program’s budget comes from the General Fund.

“By getting our children off diesel and on to electric school buses, we are better protecting their health and our entire communities from the particulate matter diesel buses spew into our neighborhoods,” **said Commissioner of Environmental Protection Shawn M. LaTourette**. “These investments will also help New Jersey to reduce its reliance on dirtier fossil fuels that are hastening climate change, extreme heat, and flooding. We should be proud of the leadership that Governor Murphy and our Legislature are showing the country—that we can improve health and fight climate change through wise government-led investment in our children and communities.”

“Today’s announcement is another step forward in the effort to electrify the transportation sector in New Jersey, one that is part of a multi-agency approach” **said Joseph L. Fiordaliso, President, New Jersey Board of Public Utilities**. “In response to the reality that more than 40 percent of the state’s emissions come from transportation, the Board has also implemented several programs aimed at increasing the number of electric vehicles on the road. Through the Charge Up NJ electric vehicle incentive program, the Clean Fleet EV incentive and infrastructure program and the multi-unit dwelling and tourism infrastructure programs we are not only encouraging New Jerseyans to drive electric but we are ensuring that when they do they will find many places along the way to charge their vehicles.”

“The New Jersey Department of Education takes pride in partnering for this legislation in an effort to continue to reduce the impact of climate change,” **said Dr. Angelica Allen-McMillan, Acting Commissioner of Education**. “The legislation also supports the mission of the New Jersey Department of Education in informing New Jersey students that we must care about the current and future health of our planet, as students continue to experience climate change action through the New Jersey Student Learning Standards.”

“The diesel exhaust from buses negatively impacts our overall health and is a major contributor to climate change,” **said Assemblyman Sterley Stanley, Assemblywoman Shama Haider, and Assemblywoman Britnee N. Timberlake**. “Under the Electric School Bus Program, New Jersey will spearhead a healthier, more efficient transportation system for students. This new program gives our State the ability to explore different approaches for electrifying our bus fleets and will give us a better understanding of how to formulate the most effective processes in the future.”

“To increase the efficiency of our fight against climate change, we must begin by incorporating environmentally friendly options into our daily lives. On a typical school day in New Jersey, more than 800,000 students utilize one of the state’s 15,000 diesel school buses,” **said Senator Patrick J. Diegnan, Jr.** “As a state, we have established ambitious goals to significantly lower our carbon emissions and become a greener place to live. Transitioning from the conventional diesel-fueled buses to those with zero-emissions will significantly decrease our state’s pollution levels and further enable us to achieve our ecofriendly goals.”

“I would like to thank the Governor for prioritizing student health and signing this critical program into law today. On average, children who ride in a diesel-powered school bus are exposed to 4-12 times the level of toxic exhaust than riding in a car,” **said Senator Linda R. Greenstein**. “School buses are known to emit greenhouse gases and carcinogens, both of which contribute to climate change and threaten exposed individuals with elevated lifetime risks of developing cancer, asthma, and heart disease. By implementing this program, we’re offering students a healthier and more environmentally friendly way to get to and from school each day.”

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