

HB 2945 -1 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Joint Committee On Transportation

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Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 4/15

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure establishes state policy on the purchase of new zero-emission school buses. It directs the Department of Environmental Quality to adopt rules requiring the purchase of new zero-emission school buses in certain specified areas and requires purchase of zero-emission school buses if the price is equal to a comparable internal combustion engine school bus. It establishes a Zero-Emission School Bus Assistance Fund. The measure declares emergency and takes effect on 91s day following adjournment sine die.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-1 The amendment replaces the original measure, directing the Environmental Quality Commission, in consultation with the State Board of Education, to adopt rules to establish and implement a program for establishing standards and providing financial and technical assistance for the procurement of zero-emission school buses. It outlines requirements for such rules and directs the Commission to appoint an advisory committee to assist. The amendment establishes a Zero-Emission School Bus Assistance Fund. Stipulates that in cases where the total cost of ownership of zero-emission buses is comparable to the total cost of ownership for diesel-powered buses, a school district may not expend funds from the State School Fund on a diesel bus unless granted an exemption, or contract for the use of school buses unless the contract provides for the use of a minimum amount of zero-emission school buses. It directs the State Board of Education to adopt, by rule, standards and procedures to allow school districts to apply for an exemption. The amendment appropriates General Fund moneys for financial assistance for the purchase or lease of new zero-emission school buses (\$20 million) and providing technical assistance to school districts (\$3 million). The amendment becomes operative on January 1, 2027, and takes effect on the 91st day following adjournment sine die.

FISCAL:

REVENUE:

BACKGROUND:

More than 21 million children ride school buses in the United States; more than 90 percent of those buses operate on diesel fuel or other fossil fuels, which have known physical and cognitive health effects on children. Some schools have begun transitioning to zero-emission buses; according to the Electric School Bus Data Dashboard, there are roughly 5,000 electric buses combined across 49 states and two American territories. There are an additional 12,241 "commitments" to purchase zero-emission school buses once funding is available. About two-thirds of all purchased and committed electric buses have been funded by the Environmental Protection Agency's Clean School Bus program, which focuses on "priority schools" that include high poverty levels, rural school districts, Bureau of Indian Affairs funded districts, and districts residing on Indian lands.