

Submitter: Nancy Ahnert
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2945

Dear Co-Chairs Gorsek and McLain, Members of the Committee,

I urge you to support HB 2945, which will accelerate Oregon's transition to zero-emission school buses.

I support this mainly because we need to do what we can about climate change. It's time to stop ignoring it. But further:

Electric school buses protect kid's health from diesel exhaust. Every day, more than 300,000 Oregon children ride school buses. Many of those buses run on diesel — a known carcinogen and a major contributor to asthma, bronchitis, and other respiratory issues. Children are especially vulnerable to the impacts of diesel exhaust. Zero-emission school buses offer a safer alternative.

This shift to electric buses will save school districts money. Over a bus's lifetime, electric buses cost significantly less to fuel and maintain than diesel buses—yielding taxpayer savings while also improving air quality for students. These savings are amplified when the state invests in technical assistance and planning capacity for school districts transitioning to electric fleets.

Critically, HB 2945 prioritizes at least 40% of funding for disproportionately impacted communities to ensure the health and climate benefits of zero-emission buses reach the families who need them most.

I urge you to fund this new zero pollution school program at \$20 million annually.