

Submitter: Joseph Stenger MD
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2945
Co-Chairs Gorsek and McLain, Members of the Committee:

My name is Joseph Stenger MD. As a retired family doctor, I am writing in strong support of HB 2945-1. I am also Co-Chair of the Transportation Committee of MCAT, Mobilizing Climate Action Together.

Cleaner, safer for kids and drivers, quieter, less expensive to operate and maintain, fewer emissions - all of these are advantages to switching school bus service to electric.

As Representative Neron testified, researchers have found that air pollution levels inside diesel school buses can be higher than those outside of them. Children suffer more damage at lower exposure levels than adults. This exposure causes asthma and other respiratory problems, and has been linked to cancers and lower academic performance. Bus drivers are also exposed to pollution in their vehicles, for longer periods of time. Switching to zero-emission vehicles eliminates these risks. Healthier children will be more productive adults, contributing to our economy. Furthermore, preventing health problems means avoiding health system costs.

Electric buses are less expensive to operate. They can each save \$6000 annually for fuel and maintenance costs. However, they are more expensive to acquire and they require charging infrastructure. Providing funding support is essential so I support the creation of the Zero-Emissions School Bus Assistance Fund and initially allocating \$20M toward acquisition and \$3M for technical assistance.

As we see tipping points such as rapid warming of the Arctic and melting of permafrost, climate risks and costs are dramatically increasing. Moving to a cleaner economy is increasingly urgent. Each step we take to incentivize innovation and increased production of clean technology acts in a virtuous cycle to reduce the costs of new technology as well as lifting up workers with clean tech skills. This investment in replacing outdated school buses makes good sense fiscally as well as ethically.

I support the elements of this bill that steer investment toward communities that have been most affected by pollution in general. These children and families will benefit the most, which will benefit us all by promoting a healthier workforce and lower health costs.

Investment in Oregon as a new-tech leader is good for all of us. Protecting those

most vulnerable is the right thing to do.

Thank you for considering these comments. And thank you for your service on behalf of us all.