



April 16, 2025

Oregon State Legislature
Joint Committee on Transportation
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for House Bill 2945, to establish state policy on purchasing zero-emission school buses.

Dear Co-Chairs Gorsek and McLain, Co-Vice Chairs Starr and Boshart Davis and members of the Committee,

On behalf of the more than 55,000 members and supporters of the Sierra Club Oregon Chapter, we write in support of House Bill 2945, which establishes the Zero Emission School Bus Fund to support school districts in replacing polluting, diesel-burning buses. This bill aims to improve our children's health, the health of our state and proposes monetary savings.

Electric Buses Will Save Money

Compared to diesel-burning buses, electric buses will have lower fuel costs, reduced maintenance, and potential tax breaks over the long term. While the initial purchase price may be higher, the long-term overall savings on fuel and maintenance for EVs dramatically offsets the cost differentiation. EV fuel relies on electricity, of which the charge costs are dramatically lower compared with diesel fuel. EVs also have reduced maintenance. One example is lower costs due to their regenerative braking technology, which result in less brake wear-and-tear. Another is, EVs require no engine or exhaust systems maintenance, i.e oil changes, etc.

Furthermore, research¹ suggests that electric school bus fuel and maintenance expenses are on average **\$100,000** lower over the lifetime of the bus than for diesel-burning school

¹ Recommended Total Cost of Ownership Parameters for Electric School Buses: Summary of Methods and Data
<https://www.wri.org/research/recommended-total-cost-ownership-parameters-electric-school-buses-methods-data>



buses.² There's also the potential for fleets to partner with local utilities to feed power back into the grid when buses are not in use and electricity demand is high.³

Student Health and Health of the Planet

HB 2945 is a smart and actionable climate policy. It protects our children and affirms our care for them and the planet we hope they inherit. Diesel-burning school buses emit high levels of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide, increasing the dangers of climate change and threatening to leave current and future generations in a less safe and habitable world.⁴ On a lifecycle basis, electric buses produce less than half the greenhouse gas emissions of both propane- and diesel-burning buses.⁵

This bill also aids in making our Oregon communities healthier. Diesel exhaust from buses contributes to air quality issues and has an impending impact on human health, especially in children, who have a faster breathing rate than adults and whose lungs are not yet fully developed. Diesel exhaust pollution is so dangerous, the World Health Organization labeled it a known carcinogen.⁶ One study found the average impact of higher ambient air pollution levels on lung function was similar to that of exposure to maternal smoking.⁷

HB 2945 is an important component of the overall electrification investments needed in Oregon's 2025 transportation package. Today, over 90% of the school buses on the road burn diesel fuel. Now is the time to make a change. Electric school buses represent a tangible opportunity to bring health, climate, and cost benefits to every student and every community in Oregon, starting with those most impacted by the dangers of diesel exhaust pollution.

² All About Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) for Electric School Buses

<https://electricschoolbusinitiative.org/all-about-total-cost-ownership-tco-electric-school-buses>

³ What If Electric School Buses Could be Used to Supply Power When Off Duty?

<https://www.epa.gov/greenvehicles/what-if-electric-school-buses-could-be-used-supply-power-when-duty>

⁴ The Evidence is Clear: Electric School Buses are the Best Choice to Reduce Emissions

<https://stnonline.com/partner-updates/the-evidence-is-clear-electric-school-buses-are-the-best-choice-to-reduce-emissions/>

⁵ <https://stnonline.com/partner-updates/the-evidence-is-clear-electric-school-buses-are-the-best-choice-to-reduce-emissions/>

⁶ World Health Organization, IARC: Diesel Engine Exhaust Carcinogenic

<https://www.iarc.who.int/news-events/iarc-diesel-engine-exhaust-carcinogenic/>

⁷ New England Journal of Medicine The Effect of Air Pollution on Lung Development from 10 to 18 Years of Age <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/nejmoa040610>



SIERRA CLUB
OREGON CHAPTER

Respectfully submitted,

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