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April 17, 2025

Oregon Joint Committee on Transportation  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem Oregon 97301

Re: In support of HB 2945 The Zero- Emission School Bus Act

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

On behalf of the World Resources Institute's Electric School Bus Initiative, I am writing to express strong support for HB 2945 and the -1 Amendment. This legislation will accelerate Oregon's transition to zero-emission school buses and ensure that every child - regardless of zip code - has access to safe, clean, and healthy transportation.

School buses remain one of the largest sources of daily exposure to diesel pollution for children. Many of Oregon's 300,000 student riders travel on buses run on fossil fuels, exposing them to harmful pollutants, including diesel exhaust, which is a known [carcinogen](#) and linked to [respiratory diseases](#) like asthma and [developmental](#) issues. Asthma, one of the leading causes of school [absenteeism](#), can be mitigated by reducing diesel exhaust exposure, yielding immediate health and educational benefits.

Electric School Buses (ESBs) produce zero tailpipe emissions of harmful pollutants such as nitrogen oxide and particulate matter, significantly improving air quality for students, school staff, and surrounding communities. Children, being [especially vulnerable](#) to the effects of diesel exhaust, would benefit from the cleaner air provided by electric buses. In addition, electric buses offer a quieter, smoother ride, further enhancing the overall student and driver experience.

Zero-emission school buses eliminate tailpipe pollution entirely, offering a safe, proven alternative that improves health, supports academic success, and reduces long-term transportation costs.

The benefits of HB 2945 go beyond health:

- Equity: [Black students](#), [children with disabilities](#) and [low-income students](#) are disproportionately reliant on diesel buses and therefore face greater exposure to harmful air pollution. One study has shown that communities of color experience on-road fine particulate matter pollution [61%](#)

[to 75%](#) higher than for their white counterparts. Prioritizing electric bus deployment in these areas is critical to ensuring equitable access to clean transportation.

- **Cost savings:** While the upfront cost of an ESB is currently higher than a diesel bus, ESBs save districts, on average, over \$100,000 in operational costs over the lifetime of each bus. These savings - up to \$6,000 annually per bus in fuel and maintenance costs - can be reinvested into the classroom and other educational resources, helping improve the overall quality of education in Oregon.
- **Economic opportunity:** Scaling up electric school buses creates good-paying jobs in vehicle manufacturing, maintenance, and charging infrastructure. Technologies like vehicle-to-grid integration can further support grid resilience and help integrate renewable energy into the system.

To fully realize these benefits, Oregon must complement HB 2945 with dedicated, ongoing investments, including existing programs such as Oregon's Medium Heavy Duty Zero Emission Vehicle Rebate and charging infrastructure programs. We respectfully urge the Legislature to:

- Allocate \$20 million annually to the Electric School Bus Fund for the school bus program;
- Provide \$30 million annually for the Medium-Heavy-Duty Zero-Emission Vehicle Rebate Program; and
- Dedicate \$10 million annually for charging infrastructure, paired with technical assistance for school districts.

Oregon has already made promising progress - nearly 200 electric school buses are on the road or on the way, thanks to state and federal funding. But with that ever-changing federal landscape, state leadership is essential to maintain momentum and ensure long-term success.

HB 2945 is a smart, forward-looking investment in Oregon's children, communities, and clean energy economy. We urge your strong support for this bill and the funding needed to bring its vision to life.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to a healthier, more equitable future for Oregon.

Sincerely,



Sue Gander, Director  
Electric School Bus Initiative  
World Resources Institute

