



Service Employees  
International Union  
Local 503

Mailing Address:  
P.O. Box 1259  
Salem, OR 97309-1259

3470 Pipebend Pl NE  
Salem, OR 97301

525 NE Oregon St.  
Portland, OR 97232

1.844.503.SEIU (7348)

[www.seiu503.org](http://www.seiu503.org)

To: Joint Committee on Transportation

From: Mike Powers, SEIU Local 503

RE: Support for HB 2945

Date: April 17, 2025

---

Co-Chair Gorsek, Co-Chair McLain, Co-Vice Chair Star, Co-Vice Chair Boshart Davis, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Mike Powers with our Union, SEIU Local 503. I am writing support for HB 2945. This legislation accelerates transportation electrification, supports the creation of sustainable jobs and skill-building opportunities in communities across Oregon, and provides critical financial and technical assistance. HB 2945 is a good step toward building a cleaner, healthier, and more sustainable future for our state.

SEIU Local 503 represents more than 70,000 workers across Oregon, many of whom are directly impacted by the growing effects of climate change. Our members have made addressing this crisis a top priority, recognizing that climate action is not just an environmental issue, but a matter of economic justice and public health.

Transportation is currently the largest source of climate pollution in Oregon, contributing 35% of our state's greenhouse gas emissions. Electrifying school bus fleets is part of decarbonizing this sector and meeting Oregon's climate goals. This bill also drives economic development by investing in zero-emission vehicles, which supports well-paying jobs in manufacturing, infrastructure development, utility planning, and long-term vehicle maintenance. Additionally, it helps build a smarter and more resilient energy grid through local innovation and enhanced flexibility.

HB 2945 also delivers tangible cost savings for school districts. Electric buses are significantly cheaper to fuel and maintain over time than their diesel counterparts. Importantly, the bill ensures that the transition to electric buses only occurs when the total cost – factoring in grants and rebates – is at parity with diesel models. This approach gives school districts financial flexibility while maximizing taxpayer savings.

Children's health is also a central consideration. Diesel exhaust is a known carcinogen and a leading cause of respiratory illnesses such as asthma and bronchitis. By eliminating harmful tailpipe emissions, zero-emission school buses protect children from pollution that can impair both their health and their learning potential.



The bill prioritizes the deployment of electric buses in frontline communities and ensures that rural and under-resourced districts receive the technical assistance needed to participate in this transition. This ensures that all Oregonians – regardless of zip code – can benefit from cleaner air and a healthier environment.

HB 2945 is one of the many needed steps we must take to combat climate change. It also protects our children's health, strengthens communities, creates forward-looking jobs, and lays the foundation for a clean and equitable transportation system across Oregon. We urge your support.

Thank you for your time and consideration.