

Co-Chair Gorsek, Co-Chair McLain, Co-Vice Chair Starr, Co-Vice Chair Boshart Davis, and Members of the Joint Committee on Transportation,

Please support and fully fund HB 2945 for Zero Emissions School Buses. I appreciate the compromises the committee has made in the proposed -1 amendment, though personally, I wish Oregon was ready to go bigger and bolder. I realize that there is still a bit of anxiety about non I.C.E. vehicles, some of it warranted, some not. But there is also quite a lot of anxiety about climate change, and most of that is warranted.

Many of the concerns raised by opponents of this bill are related to initial cost and range under adverse climate conditions. These concerns reflect a rather limited understanding of zero emissions vehicles and HB 2945 itself.

Initial purchase cost of a school bus, which many opponents used to justify their opposition, is an incomplete way to compare zero emissions buses with I.C.E. buses. Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) is a much more complete analysis, and when other expenses, such as maintenance and cost of fuel are factored in, electric buses compare favorably. In fact, considering TCO, school districts may save as much as \$100,000 per bus over the life of that bus. <https://electricschoolbusinitiative.org/all-about-total-cost-ownership-tco-electric-school-buses>

Opponents' concerns about range, particularly in extreme weather conditions, are probably coming from people who don't own EVs and are somewhat afraid of the unfamiliar. While it is true that range of EVs is not yet as good as that of comparable I.C.E. vehicles, it is more than sufficient (150-300 miles) even in cold weather for most rural school bus routes, and it is certainly sufficient for urban routes, which the -1 amendment now restricts this bill to. Range is a non-starter of an excuse for opposing this bill.

<https://stnonline.com/partner-updates/6-myths-about-electric-school-buses-debunked/>

As an EV owner for the past three years, I had some concerns about cost and range before I took the plunge and bought my car, but those concerns are gone now that I've had the actual experience of lower TCO and never being stranded for running out of charge (though I did have to rescue my husband last year when he ran out of gas in his I.C.E. car about 20 miles from home).

One of the things that strikes me about the opposition to this bill, besides a general lack of understanding of the facts about electric vehicles, is an incomplete understanding of the bill itself. HB 2945 would not require school districts to immediately stop driving all their diesel buses! Rather it requires the DEQ to adopt rules to require that, of the **new school buses purchased**,

- (A) By **2030**, at least 50 percent must be zero-emission school buses; and
- (B) By **2035**, at least 90 percent must be zero-emission school buses.

This means that if a school district decides to purchase 2 new buses five years from now, only one of them will have to be a zero emissions bus. Opponents of this bill need not worry: those smelly, polluting, carcinogen-creating diesel buses are going to be around for a long time still.

Further, five years from now, we can expect zero emissions school bus technology to be much further along and prices to be more competitive, as we have seen with passenger vehicles in recent years. Hydrogen fuel cell technology may even far enough along for this to be a realistic option for longer-range school buses.

This bill is really just a tiny step toward independence from a fossil fuel economy and the climate chaos it has created. But a tiny step forward is better than standing in place, or worse, going backwards, which is just what I fear the Trump Administration intends to do to “pay back” its wealthy Big Oil donors for their \$445 million in known campaign contributions. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/jan/23/big-oil-445m-trump-congress>

Please ignore the anti-science naysayers who still deny climate change is real, or those who cling to disproven myths about electric vehicles, or those who oppose EVs simply for their political alliances. Let’s get this bill passed to begin protecting our children, our communities, and our climate from the dangerous emissions our current school buses produce.

Thank you!

Debi Ferrer
The Dalles, OR