Submitter:	Kathy Calkins
On Behalf Of:	
Committee:	Joint Committee On Transportation
Measure, Appointment or Topic:	HB2945

Argument Against Electric Buses for Our School District

While electric buses offer environmental benefits and long-term savings in certain contexts, they may not be the most practical or financially responsible choice for our school district at this time. Here are several key considerations:

1. High Upfront Costs

Electric school buses can cost two to three times more than traditional diesel buses. While some grants are available, they often do not cover the full cost. For example, a typical diesel bus may cost around $150,000–$200,000, while an electric bus can exceed $450,000. For a district operating a large fleet, this cost differential becomes a significant budgetary burden.

2. Range Limitations

Electric buses typically have a range of 100–150 miles on a full charge. While this may be sufficient for some routes, it poses limitations for:

-Rural or geographically large districts with long or complex routes

-Extracurricular trips that require extended travel or unpredictable mileage

-Emergency or unscheduled route changes

-This can lead to operational inflexibility and increased logistical challenges.

3. Infrastructure and Charging Costs

Electric bus adoption requires major investment in charging infrastructure, including:

Installation of chargers (which can range from $10,000 to $50,000 per unit)

Upgrades to electrical panels and transformers

Ongoing maintenance and software systems

These costs add up quickly and often aren't included in initial vehicle purchase estimates.

4. Energy Grid Dependence and Reliability

School operations depend on consistency. In areas where the power grid is not reliable or charging infrastructure is still under development, electric buses do not provide the dependability that traditional buses offer. Charging stations for buses are not available in many areas. If needing to charge a bus immediately, the driver would have to return to their district to charge. A tow may be necessary if the bus couldn't make it, and a different bus would have to be available as a charge takes hours, not minutes to fill the tank.

5. Long-Term ROI Is Not Immediate
While electric buses do offer lower fuel and maintenance costs over time, it can take 10+ years to break even on the initial investment, assuming battery performance remains stable and replacement costs are low. For districts with limited budgets, the financial strain in the short term outweighs uncertain long-term returns.

Conclusion:
Given the significant upfront cost, infrastructure demands, and limitations in range, our district may find it more prudent to explore other cost-effective ways to reduce our carbon footprint—such as investing in cleaner diesel technologies (renewable diesel, not a fossil fuel) or hybrid options—until electric bus technology and infrastructure become more viable for widespread adoption, we should be talking about the infrastructure, not the buses themselves. Infrastructure could run into the millions for a district; more grants and funding options should be available before we put the cart before the horse.

Thank you, I am not against electric buses. I just want this to make sense, and right now the only thing that makes sense is providing options for infrastructure.

Sincerely,
Kathy Calkins