



The Climate Reality Project
NEW YORK STATE COALITION



The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

December 2021

Dear Governor Hochul,

We, the undersigned, write to collectively support S.5268/ A.6754, and respectfully encourage you to include a proposal similar these bills in your 2022 executive budget. This legislation would provide for the reimbursement of certain costs borne on school districts when they purchase or lease electric school buses, and do so in a way that gives greater assistance to the districts which need it the most. **We also encourage you to include robust funding of at least \$250 million over 5 years to meet the need to equitably transition to electric school buses, alongside technical assistance to bridge the gap between State agencies and support school districts in managing electric school bus procurement, financing and infrastructure needs.** We believe that these actions are essential to improving air quality for children across the state, yielding long-term savings for school districts, and expediting the deployment of innovative technologies to spur economic development in pursuit of reaching New York’s ambitious climate goals.

School districts face financial barriers that hinder the adoption of electric school buses in New York State, and some districts face greater barriers than others. The above proposals will provide financial incentives to schools, weighted by need, for the purchase or lease of electric school buses and the purchase of associated charging equipment and electricity, encouraging the transition to zero-emission vehicles. Furthermore, the inclusion of technical assistance will help school districts—disadvantaged school districts in particular—overcome non-financial barriers to electric school bus adoption, such as limited staffing resources or a lack of understanding around infrastructure needs. Expanding electric school bus adoption across the state will deliver financial benefits for school districts by substantially

reducing maintenance costs and, in places where utility rate policies are favorable, reducing the volatility of diesel fuel costs levied on those same districts.

Additionally, this proposal will move the state closer to reaching emissions reduction goals embedded in the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) and help reduce dangerous co-pollutants in low- and moderate-income communities. Electric school buses offer New York a pathway for substantially reducing air pollution given the transportation sector accounts for nearly one-third of its greenhouse gas emissions, making it the largest emitter in the state. As alluded to above, the incentive included in this bill is based on the level of financial aid that a school district received in the previous fiscal year, with higher incentives going to school districts that receive a higher proportion of state education aid. As a result, this legislation is geared to help school districts in low- and moderate-income communities the most, many of which have disproportionately higher levels of exposure to dangerous pollutants and may experience more incidence of premature death and elevated rates of respiratory disease. Moreover, the inclusion of dedicated school bus electrification funding and technical assistance will only help to make electric school buses more accessible to school districts in low- and moderate-income communities, amplifying the equity impacts of this legislation.

On top of the health benefits from electric school buses, school districts could also see operational savings from transitioning their bus fleets to electric. School bus operators have seen a 60% reduction in maintenance costs and an 80% reduction in fuel costs. In the future, schools could also be compensated by sending power back to the grid while the buses are not in use, thereby further improving the system's economics. [An example](#) of this vehicle-to-grid pilot has been underway in White Plains for several years with promising results.

With the passage of the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, up to \$5 billion is allocated toward the purchase of zero emissions school buses through a competitive grant process through the Environmental Protection Agency. While the details of this program are still being written, such a program could provide funds to be dispersed in a way that fits with the priorities of the state. Moreover, the establishment of state funding dedicated to school bus electrification will make New York more competitive in applying for federal funding, setting up the State to vastly increase the resources available to electrify school buses.

We believe this bill provides New York with a unique opportunity to help reach its climate goals while supporting low- and moderate-income communities and easing barriers to the adoption of innovative technologies. **For these reasons, the signatories below strongly support S.5268/ A.6754, and respectfully encourage you to include a proposal similar to these bills, alongside a dedicated funding tranche and technical assistance, in your 2022 executive budget.**

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