

**BILL:** House Bill 1255  
**TITLE:** School Bus Purchasing - Zero-Emission Vehicles - Grant Program and Fund  
**DATE:** March 26, 2019  
**POSITION:** OPPOSE  
**COMMITTEE:** Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee  
**CONTACT:** John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) opposed House Bill 1255 as introduced because it would have imposed a costly mandate on all school systems by requiring each school bus purchased after October 1, 2022 to be a zero-emission vehicle. As amended, the bill would establish a Zero-Emission Vehicle School Bus Transition Grant Program within the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE). MABE continues to object to the investment in zero-emission school buses at this time, based on the enormous cost differential associated with zero-emission school buses relative to other student transportation priorities, and other education funding priorities overall.

As the fiscal note states, “The Maryland State Department of Education advises that the cost of a traditional diesel-powered school bus can start at around \$90,000, while a comparable electric-powered school bus can cost over \$340,000. There are also additional capital costs related to electric school buses (e.g., electric charging stations). To implement a zero-emission vehicle policy to transport students, local school system expenditures would increase by a significant amount.”

Local boards of education place a very high priority on student transportation, including the substantial investment in school buses and drivers and maintenance staff. School systems also devote considerable resources to ensuring high standards for student safety relating to student transportation. Staff training is continuously ongoing whether for school system employed school bus drivers or drivers employed by school bus contractors. The high quality and safety of student transportation services, and continued state investment in this area, are among MABE’s highest priorities.

Therefore, MABE is concerned with the serious potential for shifting a significant portion of limited state funds available to support student transportation arising from this bill’s proposed grant program to promote the purchasing of zero emission school buses.

For these reasons, MABE requests an unfavorable report on House Bill 1255.