



October 4, 2023

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor of California
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Request for Signature AB 579 (Ting) – Zero-Emission School Bus

Dear Governor Newsom:

The American Lung Association writes to encourage you to sign Assembly Bill 579 (Ting) into law so that all new public school buses in California would be zero-emission as of 2035. This bill advances California leadership on zero-emission transportation to protect health in line with your Executive Order N-79-20.

Currently, over 90 percent of Californians live in communities impacted by unhealthy levels of ozone and/or particle pollution. In fact, the American Lung Association's State of the Air 2023 report found that California is home to six of the ten most ozone-polluted cities in the United States and eight of the ten most impacted by particle pollution. Children are particularly vulnerable and are at greater risk to diesel exhaust as school bus passengers or as students attending schools served by combustion buses. Exposure to diesel emissions can put students at risk "to serious health conditions like asthma and respiratory illnesses and can worsen existing heart and lung disease, especially in children... These conditions can result in increased numbers of emergency room visits, hospital admissions, absences from work and school..." according to the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

AB 579 would require new school buses to be zero-emission commencing in 2035 at local education agencies to ensure children across the state can breathe easier. This bill also extends the lease term for contracted electric school buses from 5 years to 15 years to optimize long-term savings for schools. AB 579 provides a clear timeline for full school bus electrification to ensure students enjoy the benefits of zero-emission transportation as California pursues all avenues to reduce emissions. This decision will not only reduce emissions but also provide vital health benefits to children and communities utilizing electric school buses.

The American Lung Association's "Zeroing in on Healthy Air" report found that the transition to zero-emission school buses within the broader transportation and electricity sectors could generate \$169 billion public health benefits between 2020 and 2050 in California, avoiding over 15,000 premature deaths and 440,000 asthma attacks among children. In addition to the state funds that have been available for school bus electrification, federal funds are now available to provide competitive grants for electric school buses, in addition to California's own investments.

This bill will strengthen California's leadership to transition to zero-emission school buses and reduce exposure to emissions to our vulnerable population, California children. For these reasons, our organizations support AB 579. Please contact Will Barrett at William.Barrett@Lung.org with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Will Barrett". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Will Barrett
National Senior Director
Clean Air Advocacy