

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

September XX, 2023

Dear Governor Hochul,

After a summer of alarming climate-fueled disasters, which have impacted every New Yorker and have devastated many, **the undersigned organizations write to urge for the inclusion of the provisions of the Green Transit, Green Jobs bill (A.6414/S.6089) in your forthcoming SFY2024-25 Executive Budget.**

Green Transit, Green Jobs would bolster your Administration's efforts to implement the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) by phasing out purchases of polluting buses by the end of the decade. This common-sense policy would slash harmful emissions from the transportation sector, the second biggest source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the state, while spurring the creation of high-quality green jobs, which is why it is a core strategy identified in the state's final Climate Scoping Plan.¹ Yet currently, almost all transit/paratransit buses in the state run on diesel or other fossil fuels, adding hundreds of thousands of tons of GHGs into the atmosphere, exacerbating the climate crisis.

A recent analysis found that emissions from buses have the most severe public health impact on a ton-for-ton basis out of all vehicle sectors.² Emissions from transit and paratransit buses cause or worsen respiratory and cardiovascular illnesses, leading to hundreds of premature deaths in New York State. The current fleet of buses spews toxic exhaust into local communities and lungs across the nearly 200 million miles they traverse each year, causing local air pollution along their routes and near depots. Health-harming air pollutants like PM_{2.5}, NO_x, and benzene also compound existing air quality burdens, contributing to public health disparities in low-income communities and communities of color.

Action by your Administration will be timely and help move the entire transportation sector to zero-emissions. Because they have predictable daily routes and return to a central depot, transit and paratransit buses can be easily and reliably charged in a way that saves agencies money.³ Frequent stops, fixed routes, and low-speed operation also make them ideal for electrification.⁴ A strong electrification mandate for transit and paratransit buses will neatly build off of your Administration's previous efforts, particularly the nation-leading policy to move to a 100% school bus fleet.

¹ New York State Climate Action Council, *New York State Climate Action Council Scoping Plan* at 109, 163-64 (2022), climate.ny.gov/ScopingPlan.

² Arter et al., *Mortality-Based Damages per Ton Due to the On-Road Mobile Sector in the Northeastern and Mid-Atlantic U.S. by Region, Vehicle Class and Precursor*, 16 *Env'tl. Res. Ltrs.* (2021), <https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1748-9326/abf60b>.

³ New York State Energy Research Dev. Auth., *Benefit-Cost Analysis of Electric Vehicle Deployment in New York State* at 83 (2019).

⁴ *Id.*

While we are still in the early days of the shift to electric buses, Green Transit, Green Jobs includes numerous provisions to support transit agencies in ensuring a smooth transition. First, the key mandate in the bill – the deadline by which only zero-emission buses may be procured – does not kick in until the end of the decade. It only applies to new bus purchases, allowing agencies to update their fleets over time during their natural procurement cycles. The bill also includes technical support and assistance to guide transit agencies to modernize their fleets.

A recent National Renewable Energy Laboratory analysis found that for a typical transit agency, a modest procurement of zero-emission buses (ZEBs) would yield substantial cost savings over the lifetime of the buses, paying back the upfront cost differential within a few years.⁵ Additionally, thanks to a significant infusion of federal funds on top of existing state funding support, authorities can overcome purchase price premiums right away, so there would be no delay in accruing cost savings. This has been evidenced by MTA receiving over \$110M in 2022, enough to electrify 4% of its entire fleet. In all, 8 New York transit agencies have already received federal funding to electrify a total of 300 buses, with more likely to come in the coming years.

Based on information provided by Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority, *each electric bus that replaces a diesel bus can save an agency roughly \$20,000 in fuel costs.*⁶ By 2030, purchase prices for electric buses are expected to be the same as or even less than for fossil fuel buses.⁷ Investing in ZEBs makes economic sense today and will not be burdensome for transit agencies in 2029 when the policy's mandate begins.

There is no doubt that this timeline is achievable. Many transit agencies are already adopting electric buses, with zero-emission bus deployments growing 66% since 2021 in the U.S.⁸ Globally, nearly half of all bus sales were zero-emission in 2022.⁹ Quebec, which has severe winters and similar terrain, has committed to phasing out new purchases of fossil fuel buses by 2025 – and has invested to procure nearly 1,230 electric buses.¹⁰ Green Transit Green Jobs would vault New York State back to the status of being a zero-emission transportation leader.

⁵ See Nat'l Renewable Energy Laboratory, U.S. Dep't of Energy, *Financial Analysis of Battery Electric Transit Buses* (2019).

⁶ See Press Release: Schumer, Gillibrand, Higgins Announce Nearly \$29 Million from Bipartisan Infrastructure & Jobs Law for the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority to Purchase 20 new 40-Foot Clean Electric Buses to Replace Dirty Diesel-Powered Buses and Expand Charging Infrastructure (June 21, 2023), <https://www.schumer.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/schumer-gillibrand-higgins-announce-nearly-29-million-from-bipartisan-infrastructure-and-jobs-law-for-the-niagara-frontier-transportation-authority-to-purchase-20-new-40-foot-clean-electric-buses-to-replace-dirty-diesel-powered-buses-and-expand-charging-infrastructure>.

⁷ Roush Industries, Inc., *Technical Review of: Medium and Heavy-Duty Electrification Costs for MY 2027- 2030* at 80 (2022) https://blogs.edf.org/climate411/wp-content/blogs.dir/7/files/2022/02/EDF-MDHD-Electrification-v1.6_20220209.pdf#page=80.

⁸ CALSTART, *Zeroing in on ZEBs* (2023), https://calstart.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Zeroing-in-on-ZEBs-February-2023_Final.pdf.

⁹ Nat Bullard, *Decarbonization: The Long View, Trends and Transience, Net Zero* at slide 57 (2023), <https://www.nathanielbullard.com/presentations>.

¹⁰ Mischa Wanek-Libman, *Quebec Confirms Largest North American Electric Bus Project with a C\$2.1 Billion Price Tag, More than 1,200 Vehicles*, Mass Transit (May 9, 2023), <https://www.masstransitmag.com/bus/vehicles/hybrid-hydrogen-electric-vehicles/article/53059816/quebec-confirms-largest-north-american-electric-bus-project-with-a-c21-billion-price-tag-more-than-1200-vehicles>.

The bill also includes several labor components that will ensure the state's investment in zero-emission technology will create good, family-sustaining jobs. It uses the U.S. Employment Plan, which requires a "best-value" contracting framework to guide procurements of ZEBs and related infrastructure. This incentivizes proposals offering jobs with high wages, good benefits, and prioritizing hiring from disadvantaged communities – furthering the state's commitment to climate justice. Procurements using the U.S. Employment Plan have a proven track record of creating hundreds of high-quality jobs. This legislation will also provide a just transition for workers in the traditional bus system through identifying the necessary resources to retrain existing workers and the development of a plan to train or retrain impacted workers", and gives local communities a say in the process. We echo the recent letter by [seven labor unions](#), who are also calling for Green Transit Green Jobs in your next budget, because of its protections for existing workers and the opportunity to create thousands of new good jobs in manufacturing ZEBs.

Your administration has prioritized addressing many issues facing transit riders, such as new enhanced service and the fare-free bus pilot program, and has also supported the transportation needs of families, by promoting electric school buses. By including Green Transit, Green Jobs in your Executive Budget and allocating \$100 million to non-MTA transit agencies, you can double down by addressing the direct climate and air pollution impacts – impacts which hit riders and their communities hardest – while addressing transit agencies' and workers' concerns about a fair and just transition. This policy is a win-win that you should not hesitate to include in the SFY2024-25 budget.

Sincerely,

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cc (via email): Nivardo Lopez
 Kathy Persichilli Keogh
 Sean Ewart
 John O'Leary
 Kathryn Garcia
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 [others from meeting]