

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Chairman
Senate Committee on Environment and
Public Works
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Environment and
Public Works
Washington, D.C. 20510

July 30, 2025

**RE: Letter for the Record on Senate Environment and Public Works Full Committee Hearing
Titled “Constructing the Surface Transportation Reauthorization Bill: Stakeholders’
Perspectives”**

Dear Chairman Capito, Ranking Member Whitehouse, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations and the millions of members we represent, we appreciate the opportunity to submit comments and materials on the July 16, 2025 hearing, “Constructing the Surface Transportation Reauthorization Bill: Stakeholders’ Perspectives.”

As Austin Ramirez, President and CEO of Husco, pointed out during the hearing, programs created under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021 are fueling a boom in U.S. manufacturing, ensuring we maintain our economic competitiveness while improving transportation for millions of Americans. As Mr. Ramirez mentioned, the EPA Clean School Bus Program (CSBP) is an excellent example of what we can achieve for our communities when we invest in modernizing our infrastructure.

Since launching in 2022, the Clean School Bus Program has been overwhelmingly successful and popular, helping to upgrade hundreds of fleets. Congress created the program to provide \$5 billion in funding to replace aging diesel school buses with cleaner models. To date, EPA has [awarded](#) \$2.7 billion for over 8,500 clean school buses at more than 1,000 school districts in [49 U.S. states, D.C., four U.S. territories and 60 federally-recognized Tribes](#). [75% of awards](#) have gone to low-income, rural or Tribal school districts, and [more than 2,200 electric school buses](#) have already been [delivered](#) to U.S. schools under the program. Another \$2 billion remains to be distributed.

States, school districts and private industry have sought out this funding, understanding that clean school buses cost less to maintain and operate than diesel models. Over 2,500 school districts, from every U.S. state, have applied for this voluntary program, requesting approximately \$7.7 billion in CSBP funds. Because of the program, [clean school buses in rural communities have increased 180% since 2022](#). The cost savings associated with clean school buses is money school districts can be [reinvested in the classroom](#).

Best yet, the program is helping kids breathe cleaner air. Diesel pollution is linked to lung and heart illnesses, even cancer, and can shorten lifespans and worsen asthma, the top chronic condition for children and a leading cause of school absences. These harms are especially severe in low-income communities and communities of color, where children are exposed to [28% more diesel pollution](#) than their peers. [Asthma rates among children of color are significantly higher](#), and studies show that diesel exhaust inside school buses can reach levels up to [46 times](#) what the EPA considers a significant cancer risk. Electric school buses can [significantly reduce major pollutants](#), which means healthier air for students and better air quality for all.

The program has also boosted manufacturing in the school bus industry, as companies raced to meet demand. Blue Bird, the largest U.S. school bus manufacturer based in Fort Valley, Georgia, increased from [1,500 workers in 2023](#) to [2,000](#) in 2024, as it [aims to manufacture 5,000 electric school buses per year](#). In May 2023, Blue Bird opened a new 40,000 square foot [EV manufacturing facility in Georgia](#) to meet growing demand. With a third electric school bus production facility underway, Blue Bird is expected to create another 428 manufacturing jobs and 250 construction jobs.

In 2022, Thomas Built Buses, the second largest U.S. school bus manufacturer based in High Point, North Carolina, added [extra production shifts](#) and hired another 280 employees in response to [electric school bus demand](#). Thomas Built is nearing capacity to build 1,000 electric school buses per year. These investments help further develop U.S. dominance in clean technology development, ensuring that American workers and companies are not left behind in the clean energy economy.

Recognizing the impact of the Clean School Bus Program and the opportunity to improve public transportation millions rely on, states have also stepped up. Since 2022, over a dozen states have established their own electric school bus programs to complement federal efforts. This includes California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Virginia, Washington, and West Virginia.

Utilities, too, have created their own programs to augment electric school bus infrastructure funding, most notably in California, Colorado, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina, and Virginia, among others. In total, according to [Atlas EV Hub](#), utilities have invested approximately \$864 million since 2022 for all kinds of medium- and heavy-duty vehicle charging infrastructure, which includes make-ready programs and incentives for electric school buses. Many of these programs incentivize [vehicle-to-grid-capable electric school buses](#), which can use stored power in their batteries to [deliver energy to the grid during peak demand](#) and prevent emergency shut-offs.

These gains are bound to increase. Over 23 million U.S. children rely on school buses each school day, in every state and territory. School buses remain our country's largest -- and safest -- form of public transportation, with [450,000 school buses on the road traveling 4.3 billion miles](#) per year. Yet most of these school buses are diesel buses and many are over a decade old, using outdated technology that is particularly polluting and especially harmful to the children who ride them. Older, pre-2009 buses are [linked to increased school absences](#), and [low-income and rural communities are more likely](#) to rely on these most polluting models. Accordingly, the Clean School Bus Program prioritizes replacement of model year 2010 or older school buses.

While the Clean School Bus Program has made significant progress, demand for funding has greatly outpaced the supply. EPA had to double Clean School Bus Program funding awarded in 2022, 2023 and 2024 after receiving far more applications than expected; nearly \$8 billion has been requested for \$2.7 billion distributed. For every application awarded, another 2 applicants wanted funding but didn't receive it. This means approximately 1,200 school districts are waiting for funding. EPA received another \$900 million in applications for the fourth round of the Clean School Bus Program closing in January 2025. Awards are overdue to be announced.

It's clear that the Clean School Bus Program is already making a difference and needs more support. Thousands of school districts throughout the country are waiting for more funding. Millions of children still need a clean ride to school. We can and must provide public transportation that is reliable, safe and used by our most vulnerable and precious cargo.

Given its successful track record and high demand, we urge Congress to include the Clean School Bus Program within the reauthorization of the Surface Transportation bill. We look forward to working with the committee to increase the program's efficiency and effectiveness.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments

Chispa LCV

Clean Energy Works

Environmental Defense Fund

Environmental Law & Policy Center

Generation180

Jobs to Move America

It's Electric! Coalition

League of Conservation Voters

MN350

Moms Clean Air Force

Mothers Out Front

Piedmont Environmental Alliance

Sierra Club

Southern Alliance for Clean Energy

WE ACT for Environmental Justice