



May 13, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg, Secretary  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20590

**Reg: Montgomery County Department of Transportation's application for funding through the Federal Transit Administration's Low or No Emission Grant Program for the Hydrogen Buses and Fueling Site Project.**

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

Sierra Club Montgomery County Maryland Group is writing in strong support of Montgomery County Department of Transportation's application for funding through the Federal Transit Administration's Low or No Emission Grant Program for the Hydrogen Buses and Fueling Site Project.

The climate crisis is the challenge of our lifetime. Montgomery County's Climate Action Plan calls for the transition to a 100 percent zero emission fleet of buses by 2035. This project is a critical step in the path to a clean, reliable fleet. Cutting emissions from fossil fuel powered vehicles is a crucial step toward protecting the health of communities.

This project's 13 hydrogen fuel cell buses, and construction of a hydrogen fuel production and dispensing station in Gaithersburg, will support the County's bus transit operations, prevent the release of particulate matter, and make our air cleaner. Because the Gaithersburg/Rockville area is host to several of our life sciences, medical and educational institutions, an added benefit of this clean-energy transit project will be connecting underserved communities to healthcare, education and jobs.

Important to note is that fuel cell buses are well-suited for longer bus routes. Based on today's battery performance, the County could expect to reliably operate only 28% of its routes with battery electric buses; however, fuel cell buses could operate on all routes. The addition of hydrogen fuel cell buses, alongside existing and planned battery-electric buses, will enable the County to provide sustainable and reliable bus service across its one million residents.

Sierra Club believes this project will help address climate change. In addition to the benefit of using zero-emission vehicles, Sierra Club also wants more people to use public transit, which can convey many more people in much less space than individual automobiles, which keeps traffic congestion lower, which in turn reduces air pollution caused by vehicles idling.

The National Capital region is looking to Montgomery County, with its track record of sustainability and innovation, to take the lead in implementing this new clean fuel technology. The hydrogen fuel production at this site will be greener than traditional fossil fuel-based hydrogen production, as the hydrogen fuel will be produced from water using zero-emission electrolysis. We would be proud for Maryland to become the East Coast hub of the clean energy economy.

We appreciate USDOT's commitment to funding high-quality projects with visible and sustainable community benefits, and we urge you to support funding this worthy project.

Sincerely,  
Shruti Bhatnagar, Chair  
Sierra Club Montgomery County, Maryland  
Shruti.bhatnagar@mdsierra.org | 240.498.3459

Tina Slater, Transportation Lead  
Sierra Club Montgomery County, MD  
slater.tina@gmail.com