

NJ Electric School Bus Act

On August 4, 2022, NJ Governor Phil Murphy signed into law A1282/S759, the NJ Electric School Bus Act. Assemblyman Sterley Stanley was the prime sponsor in the Assembly, and Senator Patrick Diegnan, Jr, was the Senate prime sponsor.

This Act establishes a \$45 million dollar fund to be spent over 3 years to help a minimum of 18 school districts purchase electric school buses. The intent of the bill is to test different technologies and financing mechanisms to lay the groundwork for major programs to replace all 10,000 diesel powered school buses in the state to zero emission battery electric buses.

Grantees who receive funds under the program will be required to report their operating costs, mileage statistics and reliability to the NJ Dept. of Environmental Protection in order to prepare a report at the end of the 3 years recommending what technologies work best and how the state can best reduce the cost of replacing the state's school bus fleet.

The grants are to be evenly divided between the northern, central and southern sectors of the state. Environmental Justice communities are guaranteed half the grants, as are districts that own their own school buses.

The Act sets minimum standards for buses purchased under the program, including:

- A minimum range of 90 miles per charge or 30% more range than the daily maximum miles driven in a day, whichever is greater
- A telematics system that can download daily operating statistics, including mileage driven, kWh/mile efficiency, time to fully charge the bus's batteries, equipment failure, and other relevant data directly to NJDEP.
- Bus operator and maintainer training
- A charging infrastructure, including charging stations and energy management software
- Delivery of shop manuals, wiring schematics, and a list of component parts

NJDEP is authorized to chair a working group of other state agencies, including the BPU, NJDOT, EDA, NJMVC, and the Dept. of Education to identify and resolve any regulatory impediments to the adoption of zero emission electric school buses.

NJDEP is required to issue rules and regulations and initiate the program no later than 6 months after the Act was signed into law.