



Whereas, New York City school buses are owned and operated by private fleets, which are eligible to apply for the New York City Private Fleet Alternative-Fuel/Electric Vehicle (EV) Program sponsored by NYSERDA, which is currently accepting proposals for \$1.5 million in grants until September 13, 2001; and  
Whereas, This program will pay for 40% of the incremental cost of light-duty AFVs and up to 70% of the incremental cost of medium and heavy-duty vehicles; and  
Whereas, By combining these incentives with the New York State Alternative Fuel Vehicle Tax Credit, it is possible to purchase an AFV for nearly the same cost as a conventional gasoline or diesel vehicle; and  
Whereas, The state's Private Fleet AFV/EV Program was made available for the first time last year and \$378,000 was awarded to three fleets for the purchase of nine heavy-duty trucks and 50 light-duty vehicles that use compressed natural gas; now therefore, be it  
Resolved, That the New York City Council calls upon the New York City Board of Education and New York State agencies to expedite their efforts to reduce emissions from diesel fuel school buses and to purchase new alternative fuel vehicles as quickly as possible to safeguard the health of our school children.

LS #4473/ AS

MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT

TITLE:

A resolution calling upon the New York City Board of Education and New York State agencies to expedite their efforts to reduce emissions from diesel fuel school buses and to purchase new alternative fuel vehicles as quickly as possible to safeguard the health of our school children.

TYPE OF LEGISLATION:

A Resolution

REASONS FOR SUPPORT:

The vast majority of our nation's school bus fleets run on diesel fuel, and with New York State being home to more than 60,000 school buses-- which is more than any other state in the nation--it was disturbing to learn that a recent study conducted by the Natural Resources Defense Council revealed that particulate and other harmful matter contained in this fuel can pose serious health implications for our students--from the risk of cancer to exacerbating and asthma and other respiratory illnesses.

A significant number of buses that are 15 years of age or older can cause much more pollution than diesel buses that are being manufactured today. Some bus fleets contain buses manufactured prior to 1977, which may translated into some children riding on some of the highest polluting vehicles on the road today. Moreover, it is not the individual riding in the car behind or in front of a diesel school bus that is exposed to harmful emissions, but rather students riding inside a diesel school bus that are being exposed to high levels of toxic diesel exhaust.

According to the Natural Resources Defense Council, which released a report about the adverse impact these buses pose to our students' health, it is estimated that for every 1 million children riding the school bus for 1 to 2 hours each day during the school year, 23 to 46 children may eventually develop cancer from the excess diesel exhaust they inhale on their way to and from school.

Aside from cancer causing agents, diesel exhaust is also known to be a major source of fine particles, which can lodge deep in the lungs of children and exacerbate asthma and other respiratory illnesses. Children are generally more susceptible to negative health effects of air pollution because their organs are still developing and are far less capable of defending the body from airborne toxins and pollutants.

However, cleaner fuel alternatives to diesel school buses, such as those that run on compressed natural gas and propane are currently and widely available, and are being used by a number of school districts across the country.

While the United States Environmental Protection Agency has issued a ruling mandating the future sale of low-sulfur, less harmful diesel fuel to become more widely available in 2006, our students health cannot be compromised for the next five years, but rather must be protected today by exploring the clean fuel alternatives that are currently available.

New York City school buses, which are owned and operated by private fleets, are eligible to apply for the New York City Private Fleet Alternative Fuel Vehicle (AFV)/Electric Vehicle (EV) Program, which is open until September 13, 2001. This program will pay for 40% of the incremental cost of light duty Alternative Fuel Vehicles (AFV) and up to 70% of the incremental cost of heavy duty vehicles. This incentive, combined with the New York State AFV Tax Credit, would make it possible to purchase cleaner modes of transportation for very close to the price of a diesel vehicle.

Approximately 130 school districts across the country are operating natural gas and other alternative fuel school buses to protect their students' health, and therefore I urge support of this resolution, which seeks to explore those alternatives, with the goal of similarly protecting the health and well-being of New York City school students.

Member's signature

Member's signature

