



September 1, 2021

The Honorable Tom Carper
Chairman
Committee on Environment & Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Ranking Member
Committee on Environment & Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

CC: Members of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works; Members of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce

Dear Chairman Carper, Ranking Member Capito, Chairman Pallone and Ranking Member McMorris Rodgers:

As health organizations, we represent physicians, nurses, mental health professionals, public health professionals, health care workers, health scientists and researchers, patients and advocates all dedicated to promoting health and saving lives. We urge you to maximize funding for zero-emission school buses as part of federal infrastructure investments.

Nationally, more than 480,000 school buses are on the road, carrying millions of children every day. Currently 95 percent of these buses are diesel-powered. Diesel exhaust exposure is linked to serious health effects in children, including asthma attacks and diminished brain function. Children are especially vulnerable to poor air quality, as their brains and respiratory systems are still developing.

One-third of American children take the bus to school. Kids from low-income communities are more likely to depend on school buses, and thus bear more of the burden of pollution from diesel buses. Black and Hispanic communities are exposed to disproportionately high levels of particle pollution and its resulting health effects, and people of color already face more health disparities and less access to quality healthcare. Breathing in dirty air compounds on existing

negative social determinants of health, and we urge you to do everything you can to eliminate the unnecessary burden of diesel exhaust on children's health.

Exhaust from polluting vehicles, buses and trucks also contributes to climate change. Climate change is a health emergency, making the urgency to reduce emissions all the more pressing. According to a new report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the window is closing on the opportunity to mitigate the worst impacts of climate change.¹

As you continue working on the budget reconciliation legislation, we ask you to support the electrification of America's school bus fleet to create a safer, healthier environment for all children. Because initial costs are high, many districts continue to use polluting, unhealthy diesel buses. A federal investment of \$20 billion can electrify one-fifth of all diesel-powered school buses and help create additional momentum for zero-emission vehicles nationally. This is a good investment—in public health, in education, in our economy and in our children's futures.

The bipartisan infrastructure package recently passed in the Senate was a good start, with at least \$2.5 billion allotted for zero-emission school buses. We now call on you to build on that investment to ensure it meets the enormous need for children nationwide. The below organizations urge your committees to continue to prioritize funding for zero-emission school buses in the reconciliation bill to maximize the benefits to children's health.

Sincerely,

Allergy & Asthma Network
Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Lung Association
American Public Health Association
American Psychological Association
American Thoracic Society
Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America
Children's Environmental Health Network
Climate for Health
Medical Students for a Sustainable Future
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of School Nurses
National League for Nursing

¹ IPCC, 2021: Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [Masson-Delmotte, V., P. Zhai, A. Pirani, S. L. Connors, C. Péan, S. Berger, N. Caud, Y. Chen, L. Goldfarb, M. I. Gomis, M. Huang, K. Leitzell, E. Lonnoy, J. B. R. Matthews, T. K. Maycock, T. Waterfield, O. Yelekçi, R. Yu and B. Zhou (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press. In Press.