



January 4, 2024

The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
New York State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Hochul,

In 2022, you made the bold and important step of including within the State Budget the first school bus fleet electrification program in the country. This program requires school districts to transition to an all zero-emission bus fleet by 2035 and limits school bus purchases to only zero-emission vehicles (ZEV) starting in 2027. Through this action, the State asserted bold leadership and recognized the need for a more sustainable school transportation system to address greenhouse gas emissions and the respiratory health of the children and communities that school buses serve.

The 2022 Clean Water, Clean Air, and Green Jobs Environmental Bond acts provided \$500 million in funding for school districts to purchase buses and install charging infrastructure, in addition, traditional State aid to school districts for transportation and capital costs can be utilized. But both of these funding sources require bus, charging and infrastructure purchases to be reviewed by the State Education Department (SED). More importantly, any charging infrastructure plans need to be reviewed and permitted by the Department's Office of Facilities Planning.

The NYS [Regents' 2024 budget](#)¹ request includes \$300,000 for additional staff to implement the ZEV bus program. These additional SED personnel will review and approve school electrification plans and bus purchases, and are crucial to ensuring that school bus fleet electrification unfolds as seamlessly and rapidly as possible. These additional staff hires are needed to provide electrical engineering expertise and reduce the time delays in project approvals.

¹ [December 2023 Meeting of the Board of Regents - 2024-2025 Regents State Aid Proposal \(nysed.gov\)](#) p.7

The Alliance for Clean Energy New York, Advanced Energy United, the New York League of Conservation Voters and the Rural Schools Association of New York State are writing to respectfully request that you include these staff positions in your 2024-25 proposed State Budget. New York State has the opportunity to demonstrate to the rest of the country that school bus fleet electrification is not only feasible but has significant health and climate benefits. These additional SED staff members will reduce bureaucratic delays and speed the transition to an all ZEV school bus fleet.

Thank you for your consideration. Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Deb Peck Kelleher
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Nathan Willcox
Advanced Energy United

Julie Tighe
New York League of Conservation Voters

David Little, Esq.
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