
OLR Bill Analysis

HB 5470

AN ACT CONCERNING HYBRID SCHOOL BUSES.

SUMMARY

This bill generally eases the current requirement for school districts to transition to zero-emission school buses by delaying the transition's deadline for certain school districts and allowing alternative fuel and hybrid school buses to meet the requirement.

Current law requires that all school buses be zero-emission school buses by (1) January 1, 2030, in school districts entirely within, or that contain, an environmental justice community as of July 1, 2022, and (2) January 1, 2040, in other districts. It also sets an interim requirement for school districts not located entirely within, or that do not contain, an environmental justice community, requiring that 100% of buses in these districts be either zero-emission school buses or alternative fuel school buses by January 1, 2035.

The bill instead requires all school buses to be either zero-emission, alternative fuel, or hybrid buses by January 1, 2040, regardless of the school district's location. Under the bill, a "hybrid school bus" is a school bus that uses (1) a combustion engine fueled by gasoline, diesel, liquefied natural gas, compressed natural gas, hydrogen, propane, or biofuels and (2) an electric motor capable of propelling the bus that is powered by an electric battery or battery pack, to provide vehicle propulsion from either the combustion engine or the electric motor, or both. By law, an "alternative fuel school bus" is a school bus that reduces emissions and is operated entirely or in part using liquefied natural gas, compressed natural gas, hydrogen, propane, or biofuels.

Current law also generally requires the energy and environmental protection commissioner to (1) have a grant program to award matching funds needed for municipalities, school districts, and school bus

operators to submit federal grant applications and maximize federal funding for zero-emission school buses and electric vehicle (EV) charging or fueling infrastructure and (2) give administrative and technical assistance to municipalities, school districts, and school bus operators transitioning to zero-emission school buses, applying for federal grants for them, and installing EV charging and fueling infrastructure. The bill correspondingly expands these requirements to also cover alternative fuel and hybrid school buses.

It also makes technical and conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

BACKGROUND

Related Bill

sSB 416, favorably reported by the Transportation Committee, (1) requires 90%, rather than 100%, of school buses to be zero-emission by 2040 and sets earlier interim deadlines for distressed municipalities; (2) eliminates the requirement that environmental justice communities fully transition to zero-emission school buses by 2030; (3) requires municipalities to submit plans outlining how they will meet the requirements; and (4) modifies the zero-emission school bus grant program.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Energy and Technology Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 22 Nay 4 (03/19/2026)