

June 19, 2015



The Honorable Mary Nichols
Chair, California Air Resources Board
1001 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95812

RE: 2015-16 Funding Plan for Low Carbon Transportation Investments and Air Quality Improvement Program – School Buses in Rural School Districts

Dear Chair Nichols,

I write in support of the staff proposal to set aside \$5 million in the Zero-Emission Truck and Bus Pilot Commercial Deployment Project for school buses in rural school districts. This program would provide small school districts educating and transporting disadvantaged students with much-needed funding to replace old and polluting school buses.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, more than half of today's school buses have been in service for over a decade and emit nearly twice as much pollution per mile as a semi-truck. Along with having an adverse effect on our environment, this can also lead to increased health risks for younger students whose respiratory systems are still developing.

Transportation costs per students for small schools districts are also typically higher than that of suburban school districts due to the greater distances students are required to travel to and from school, yet they often miss out on grant opportunities that are aimed at more urban school districts. This \$5 million investment is the first of its kind to dedicate funding specifically for rural school buses. Without support from bus replacement programs, the disadvantaged youth in small school districts are often denied access to clean, healthy transportation.

This \$5 million set aside is a modest investment in a state in which more than half of all school districts are small. Should you have any questions, please contact my legislative advocate, Erin Evans-Fudem, at (916) 557-9745 or erin@capitoladvisors.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "S. Herrington". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Steven D. Herrington, Ph.D.
Sonoma County Superintendent of Schools