

Monday, April 1, 2024

Acting Administrator Veronica Vanterpool  
Federal Transit Administration  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Secretary Pete Buttigieg  
Office of the Secretary  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg and Administrator Vanterpool,

As a unique coalition of electric vehicle advocates, environmental and science non-profits, grassroots advocates, diversity, equity, and inclusion advocates, a clean technology consortium, and environmental, climate, and social justice advocates, we are writing to express our appreciation for the Administration's recent action on the Low and No Emissions Vehicle program (Low-No) and Buses and Bus Facilities Program (5339(b)) to address pressing issues that bus manufacturers are facing.

According to the EPA, transportation is the leading source of greenhouse gas emissions in the nation. We view electrification of our transportation sector alongside a transportation mode-shift as key policies to address our greenhouse gas emissions and fulfill the Biden Administration's ambitious climate and equity goals. Public transportation has been a leader in bolstering the zero-emission transition of the medium and heavy duty transportation sector, and this program's progress is critical.

While the historic Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is providing groundbreaking investments for zero-emission buses, it is also true that American clean transit manufacturers are struggling to stay afloat. According to [research](#) from the Eno Center for Transportation, misaligned incentives in federal programs have driven up the cost of federally-funded zero-emission buses compared with buses purchased without federal dollars. These problems have resulted in a loss of American manufacturing jobs and a slower, more expensive transition to zero-emissions buses, while low income and Black and Brown communities bear the burden of poor air quality and anemic transit service.

With these problems in mind, we sent a [letter](#) in October urging the FTA to pursue three key reforms we believe will assist in growing our zero-emission public transit system:

- Provide reasonable limits on the customization of transit vehicles

- Ensure procurement reform and;
- Ensure FTA funding guarantees expeditious deployments

In the new Notice of Funding Opportunity for these programs released in February 2024, we were heartened to see language indicating FTA will prioritize reduced customization, joint procurement, standard vehicle models, and advance or progress payments to bus manufacturers. We thank you for embedding these critical policy priorities into this year's funding opportunity, and urge you to ensure that these policies become a permanent fixture of the federal transit program.

We, the undersigned organizations, thank you for acting swiftly on this issue and taking steps that will speed our transition to zero-emission public transit and support American manufacturing jobs. We will continue to track the impact of these changes implemented to ensure they create successful outcomes. Our coalition is here to assist your teams in implementing successful programs. We hope, and have reason to believe, that they will.

Sincerely,

Better Eugene - Springfield Transportation  
CALSTART  
CASA / CASA in Action  
Center for Sustainable Technology  
Central Maryland Transportation Alliance  
Clean Energy Works  
DC Transportation Equity Network  
Denver Streets Partnership  
EarthJustice  
East Metro Strong  
Electrification Coalition  
Environmental Defense Fund (EDF)  
Evergreen Action  
Forth  
Genesis: an affiliate of the Gamaliel Network  
GreenLatinos  
International Parking & Mobility Institute (IPMI)  
Labor Network for Sustainability  
League of Conservation Voters (LCV)  
Madison Area Bus Advocates  
Mobilify Southwestern Pennsylvania  
Move LA  
Move Redmond  
National Campaign for Transit Justice  
Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)  
New Jersey Future

New Urban Mobility alliance (NUMO)  
PA Jewish Earth Alliance  
Philadelphia Solar Energy Association  
Pittsburghers for Public Transit  
Plug In America  
Reconnect Rochester  
Riders Alliance  
Sierra Club  
Southern Environmental Law Center  
Sustainable Charlotte  
The Street Trust  
The Street Trust - Oregon  
Together for Brothers and Albuquerque  
Transit Alliance of Middle Tennessee, Inc.  
Transportation Committee of MCAT; Mobilizing Climate Action Together  
Transportation for America  
Tri-State Transportation Campaign  
Union of Concerned Scientists  
Zero Emissions Transportation Association (ZETA)