



**TO: Colorado House Energy & Environment Committee**  
**FROM: Nick Torres – Director, Advocacy**  
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**DATE: April 21, 2022**  
**SUBJECT: Senate Bill 22-193**

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Today marks the release of the American Lung Association’s [2022 “State of the Air”](#) report. It reveals Colorado air quality is getting worse for many areas of the state. The report provides state and local grades for both ozone and particle pollution. Denver (7<sup>th</sup>) and Fort Collins (18<sup>th</sup>) were among the worst cities in the country for ozone pollution. In this year’s 23<sup>rd</sup> annual “State of the Air” report, and Denver and Fort Collins each recorded their worst levels ever for short-term particle pollution. What is clear is that far too many Coloradans are experiencing unhealthy levels of air pollution. In fact, 81% of Coloradans live in a county with at least one failing air quality grade.

The transportation sector is a leading source of unhealthy air in our state. The health burdens of this air pollution include increased asthma attacks, heart attacks and strokes, lung cancer and premature death. These poor health outcomes are not shared equitably, with many communities of color and lower income communities at greater risk due to increased exposure to transportation pollution.

The Lung Association strongly supports the Electrifying School Buses Grant Program and the Community Access to Electric Bicycles Grant Program contained in Senate Bill 22-193. We have serious concerns with the Diesel Truck Emissions Reduction Grant Program.

Transitioning Colorado school bus fleets from diesel to zero-emission is a particularly important opportunity to reduce the dangerous health impacts of diesel exhaust on some of our state’s most vulnerable people – our children. Diesel exhaust is a known carcinogen, and children’s brains and respiratory systems are especially sensitive to the toxics in diesel exhaust. Replacing diesel-powered buses with zero-emission buses will significantly improve air quality for students, reducing their exposure to toxic and cancer-causing pollutants like nitrogen oxides and particle pollution.

The Lung Association released polling on electric school buses last summer:

- 68% of voters supported significant government investments to transition from diesel-powered school buses to zero-emission school buses.
- 72% of voters would prefer electric school buses in their own communities instead of diesel.



Transforming Policy. Expanding Markets.

April 21, 2022

Chair Alex Valdez and Members of the House Energy and Environment Committee:

I am writing on behalf of Advanced Energy Economy (AEE) to express our support for Senate Bill 22-193. AEE is a national business association representing over 100 companies spanning the advanced energy and transportation industries.

Healthier air for children, workers, and local communities enables a healthier, more productive economy. This bill recognizes that the right mix of market signals, targeted incentives, and regulatory cues can help Colorado rapidly reverse course on worsening air quality and get a move on fleet innovation and industrial decarbonization as our ambitious emission reduction goals demand.

We commend this bill for sharpening the focus on vehicle segments that can make the biggest dent in local and regional air pollution while staying economically competitive with national market trends. Accelerating the availability of electric trucks, buses, and other forms of clean mobility will create lasting public health improvements and entice private investment to accelerate access to the latest vehicle models coming into the marketplace.

Putting the health of Colorado kids first by protecting them from harmful tailpipe emissions is common sense. The switch to electric school buses also fundamentally makes good economic sense for schools—schools that have already incorporated electric school buses into their fleets have reported receiving \$5,000-10,000 per year in savings from reduced fuel and maintenance costs, helping to achieve cost parity with these school buses' diesel counterparts. In some cases, school districts can also generate added revenue from vehicle-to-grid ("V2G") programs by working with their local utility to capitalize on back-up energy stored in school bus batteries. From Durango to Kremmling, electric school buses already in service have proven their performance and reliability to meet the needs of Colorado schools under varying weather, range, and terrain conditions. Electric school buses are entirely feasible for rural school districts and more than up to the task of safely and dependably transporting students over long distances and in mountainous areas. Based on available vehicle models today, electric school buses have an average range of 100-200 miles on a single charge; for perspective, the average school bus commute is ~70 miles in a day. It is all but certain that the market will continue to

see further improvements in range with rapid advancements in battery technology. Regenerative braking also extends range, and enables electric school buses to have, on average, higher horsepower and torque levels than the average diesel bus so they can power through hilly routes without issue.

AEE agrees that it is important to motivate and reward medium- and heavy-duty vehicle fleet operators for taking steps to incorporate cost-effective zero-emission technologies. Until market transformation reaches a tipping point, there is a legitimate and necessary role for initial public investment to help defray upfront costs for public and private fleet owners to upgrade their fleets to newer, more fuel-efficient vehicles that reduce costs at the pump and vulnerability to fuel price volatility. Giving local fleet owners the opportunity to gain direct experience with zero-emission trucks will better prepare them to choose from an expanding range of affordable, available models into the future due to a combination of growing consumer demand, public policy, and market forces. In designing the program structure and vehicle model eligibility to administer diesel truck replacement grants, AEE strongly encourages the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) to prioritize grant awards for zero-emission truck models to ensure that public investment is not working counter to the state's GHG reductions goals, environmental justice objectives, and market competitiveness.

Finally, SB 193 will better position Colorado to secure millions of dollars of competitive funding from the US EPA's Clean School Bus Program established by the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, multiplying impact that will benefit more Coloradans by hastening the return on state investment in the form of better air quality and a more modern, diversified transportation system.

We thank the sponsors for their leadership in bringing this timely, sensible legislation forward. We respectfully encourage a "YES" vote on SB 193.

Sincerely,

Emilie Olson

Policy Principal, AEE



- 82% of voters say reducing air pollution around children is not a partisan issue, it's just common sense.

The Diesel Truck Emissions Reduction Grant Program is out of place in a bill that is otherwise very thoughtful when it comes to prioritizing disproportionately impacted communities. Many of the impacted communities have expressed their disappointment that diesel trucks (and their carcinogenic diesel exhaust) would be subsidized under this program, and we share their concern. As diesel trucks are already at a cost advantage compared with zero-emission trucks, these funds would be better spent to make zero-emission trucks more accessible for smaller fleet operators or re-allocated to increase funding for electric school buses. In light of the serious air pollution problems facing our state, please consider a more forward-looking use for these funds.