

THE SENATE  
STATE OF NEW YORK



GEORGE M. BORRELLO  
SENATOR  
57TH DISTRICT

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December 14, 2023

Hon. Kathy Hochul, Governor  
Executive Chamber  
State Capitol  
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Hochul,

As a new legislative session approaches, school officials have been urging me to ‘tell Albany’ that the state’s electric bus mandate is a major concern. The extremely high costs of electric buses, the short transition timeline and the logistical challenges are all problems they believe have not been adequately addressed.

**On behalf of these schools and the communities they serve, I am requesting that you include in your Executive Budget a provision to rescind the electric bus mandate or commit to fully funding the conversion.**

With the first mandate scheduled for 2027, just three years from now, school budget officers are looking ahead at their capital costs and concerned about where the funds will come from. A new, full-size electric bus costs \$400,000 - \$450,000 - triple the price of a conventional bus which is approximately \$130,000.

With 45,000 school buses in the state, full conversion by 2035 will cost approximately \$20 billion. The cost over and above what school districts already pay for replacement buses is projected at between \$8 billion and \$15 billion statewide. These totals don’t even include the required infrastructure upgrades including installation of charging stations, electrical improvements, bus garage renovations and so on.

Without question, the \$100 million in grants the state just made available for electric school bus purchases won’t be nearly enough. That amount is enough to fund about 250 buses statewide. With over 800 school districts statewide, that isn’t even one bus per district. Even the additional \$400 million to be allocated in future rounds won’t make a dent in the cost of conversion.

**Unless the state commits to fully funding the transition or taking the common-sense step of eliminating the mandate, the costs of this politically driven initiative will fall on already-overburdened local property taxpayers.**

**That is unacceptable and I hope you agree.**

Funding isn’t the only problem with this mandate. There are other issues particularly important to rural districts that haven’t been adequately considered. Frigid temperatures decrease traveling range, which could affect school bus routes in the coldest portions of the state. School buses are also used for other purposes including

trips to athletic events and field trips, which often involve exceeding the roughly 100 mile range a bus can travel on a single charge.

Additionally, in rural communities and small communities around NY, many bridges are not rated to handle the increased weight of electric buses. A typical 72-passenger diesel school bus weighs 24,300 pounds. A 72-passenger electric bus weighs 36,000 pounds.

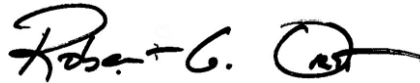
Overall, the electric bus mandate, like much of New York's climate agenda, is being rushed into place without adequate funding, regional flexibility or input from stakeholders. Those who stand to lose the most from this unfunded mandate are, once again, New York State taxpayers.

The new legislative session will offer opportunities to protect school districts and taxpayers from the unsustainable financial burden that will result from this rushed mandate. My colleagues and I would value the opportunity to work together toward this goal.

Sincerely,



Senator George M. Borrello  
57<sup>th</sup> District



Senator Robert G. Ort  
Senate Minority Leader  
62<sup>nd</sup> District



Senator Jacob Ashby  
43<sup>rd</sup> District



Senator Patrick Gallivan  
60<sup>th</sup> District



Senator Joseph A. Griffo  
53<sup>rd</sup> District



Senator Mario R. Mattera  
2<sup>nd</sup> District



Senator Dean Murray  
3<sup>rd</sup> District



Senator Thomas F. O'Mara  
58<sup>th</sup> District



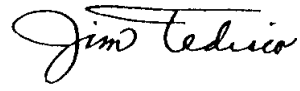
Senator Peter Oberacker  
51<sup>st</sup> District



Senator Rob Rolison  
39<sup>th</sup> District



Senator Daniel G. Stec  
45<sup>th</sup> District



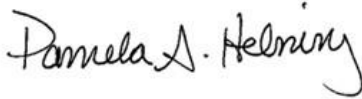
Senator James Tedisco  
44<sup>th</sup> District



Senator Mark Walczyk  
49<sup>th</sup> District



Senator Alexis Weik  
8<sup>th</sup> District



Senator Pamela Helming  
54<sup>th</sup> District