

Thank you to the chair, committee members, and staff for allowing me this moment to testify.

My name is Orville Thomas and I serve as the Director of Government Relations for the Lion Electric Company, Lion is a manufacturer of all-electric medium- and heavy-duty vehicles, including all-electric school buses. We currently have a handful of buses in operation in the White Plains area and have a maintenance center and workforce doing maintenance for electric school buses set up just outside of Albany.

As Lion's Director of Government Relations, I personally wanted to reach out and offer my support for Governor Hochul's mandate and budget outline. With our 400 all-electric buses on the road throughout the United States and Canada, Lion has a long history of helping state governments and local school districts navigate the procurement process and identify the best ways to get the most children in zero-emission transportation. With our buses operating in upstate New York and working to support New York City's push to all-electric school buses, Lion views New York as one of the most important states when it comes to pushing the rest of the country towards zero-emission school buses.

With that in mind, we hope the Governor and legislative leaders prioritize significant funding for the proposed fleet transition to all-electric. The current difference between internal combustion, diesel school buses and all-electric is around \$200,000. Any funding from the state would have to be enough to address that current delta in price while planning for more similar pricing to occur within the next decade. The funding would also need to be available to support EV infrastructure for schools and contractors so they can adequately charge the buses during the school day and alleviate concerns about range anxiety.

Outside of the funding, we hope the state is looking at ways to improve the NYTVIP grant program to help facilitate new electric school buses into the market in a way that doesn't put an unnecessary burden on the schools for upfront costs or to meet undue regulatory burdens. Lion's grant team has worked with school and community partners across the country and can help with a best practice guide for designing program funding and technical assistance aspects to get buses to communities in the fastest time possible.

As a company that has a current New York workforce, it is incredible to see Gov. Hochul and the legislature take this bold step towards 100% zero-emission school buses. This effort would create healthier communities, result in better health for our school-aged children, and be a marker for other states to follow around the country. As a leading manufacturer of all-electric medium- and heavy-duty vehicles, this electric school bus fleet transition goal is something we are watching very closely. If New York can see this mission through, Lion will be able to grow our footprint in the state and bring well-paying, green technology jobs to New York.

Thank you,
Orville Thomas