

SENATE BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint]

SENATE, No. 4077

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: DECEMBER 6, 2021

The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Senate Bill No. 4077 (1R).

Amended by the committee, this bill requires the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), to develop and implement, a three-year “Electric School Bus Program” (program). The purpose of the program is to determine the operational reliability and cost effectiveness of replacing diesel-powered school buses with electric school buses for daily transportation of students.

The bill requires the DEP to select no less than six school districts (districts) and school bus contractors (bus contractors) annually for participation in the program, so that during the third year of the program, no less than a total of 18 school districts or school bus contractors are selected for participation in the program amongst the northern, central, and southern regions of the State. At least half of the districts or bus contractors annually selected and at least half of the grant funding is to be located in a “low-income, urban, or environmental justice community” as defined pursuant to law. The DEP is to design a transparent outreach and application process to facilitate the selection of districts and bus contractors. The DEP is to use its best efforts to select an equal number of grantees from the northern, central, and southern parts of the State.

The DEP is to award grants to districts or bus contractors selected to participate in the program to purchase or lease electric school buses and to purchase or lease and install electric school bus charging infrastructure. An electric school bus and charging infrastructure vendor purchase or lease arrangement is to include certain provisions as described in the bill. Under the bill, \$45 million is made available for grants provided under the pilot program. The DEP is to provide \$15 million in grants for each year of the three-year pilot program. The DEP may use available monies to provide grants from the following sources: the societal benefits charge (SBC) revenues and the “Global Warming Solutions Fund.”

The bill requires the districts or bus contractors selected to participate in the program to submit reports to the DEP detailing the

cost to operate electric school buses, including electric school bus maintenance records and transponder data, and details of any reliability issues related to the operation of the buses. The DEP is to establish a committee, chaired by a representative of the DEP, which also includes a representative of the BPU and the EDA. The committee is to meet monthly to review the reports and recommend solutions to any issue raised in a quarterly report submitted by a pilot program participant. The committee is to require a recipient of any grant under any State agency-administered program for the provision of an electric school bus and electric school bus charging infrastructure prior to the effective date of the bill to submit any additional information and data to the committee to compliment any data received by the committee from program participants.

The bill requires the DEP, in collaboration with the BPU and the EDA, to submit reports to the Governor and Legislature within six months following the conclusion of the program.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amendments make various changes to the bill, including: changes to the title and synopsis of the bill; changing the pilot program to a program; providing that the DEP rather than the EDA is to be the main administrator of the program; modifying the consultation roles from various executive branch agencies and departments; changing the minimum range required for an electric school bus; providing that program in the second and third year is subject to the availability of funds; and providing additional standards and requirements for implementation of the program.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Fiscal information is currently unavailable for this bill.