

NEW YORK MAKES \$100 MILLION AVAILABLE FOR SCHOOLS DISTRICTS TO CONVERT TO ELECTRIC BUSES

INSIGHT

New York wants to be the first state in the nation with all electric school buses, and an upcoming webinar will provide school districts the opportunity to learn more about Gov. Kathy Hochul's plan and how to access some of the \$100 million she is setting aside for implementation of the New York School Bus Incentive Program.

The [webinar](#), hosted by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), is scheduled for Dec. 11, 2023, at 3 p.m. School districts will have access to financing under this program and others to help with converting to all-electric buses, but researching the possibilities, determining eligibility, completing applications and getting information from NYSEDA is likely to be a comprehensive and complicated process. Harris Beach's [Energy Industry Team](#) – which works closely with our [K-12 attorneys](#) – has deep experience engaging with NYSEDA and can support your efforts.

Hochul's plan will use \$100 million from the 2022 \$4.2 billion Clean Water, Clean Air, and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act to help make clean buses and associated charging infrastructure more affordable for school districts. The effort supports the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 85 percent by 2050, and New York state's requirements that all new school buses sold in New York state be zero-emission by 2027 and all school buses in the state be electric powered by 2035.

The School Bus Incentive Program provides money to eligible school bus fleet operators that purchase zero-emission battery electric vehicles (BEV) or hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicles (FCEV). Incentive amounts start at \$114,000 and are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Larger amounts are available for priority districts, defined by the New York State Climate Justice Working Group as [high-need school districts and disadvantaged communities](#).

Additional incentives are available for removing internal combustion engine buses from operation, as well as for purchasing wheelchair accessible buses, or purchasing buses with vehicle-to-grid capability.

The plan also calls for rebates to school districts or contracted bus operators that purchase and install eligible charging infrastructure when buying zero-emission school buses. Those operators are eligible to receive \$25,000 per bus for charging infrastructure, or \$35,000 if they serve a priority district. Fleet owners that have completed electrification plans are eligible to receive \$55,000 per bus for charging infrastructure, or \$65,000 if they serve a priority district.

Program eligibility and rules are available online through the [NYSBIP Implementation Manual](#). NYSEDA will accept applications on a rolling basis until funding is exhausted under the current round and will accept applications under future rounds as it oversees the distribution of the Bond Act's additional \$400 million earmarked for zero-emission school buses and infrastructure.

These resources are in addition to others set aside for transitioning to zero-emission buses, including the [New York State Electric School Bus Roadmap](#) and the [Electric School Bus Guidebook](#). Additionally, \$5 million of the initial \$100 million in Environmental Bond Act funding is set aside for [technical assistance](#) for New York State school bus fleets to develop fleet electrification plans.

Harris Beach's energy lawyers are working with our [Education Industry Team](#) to monitor this and related matters. If you need assistance or have questions, please reach out to energy attorney [William M. Flynn](#), a former NYSERDA president, at (518) 701-2711 and wflynn@harrisbeach.com, education attorney [Jeffrey J. Weiss](#) at (716) 200-5141 and jweiss@harrisbeach.com, or the Harris Beach attorney with whom you most frequently work.

This alert is not a substitute for advice of counsel on specific legal issues.

Harris Beach has offices throughout New York state, including Albany, Buffalo, Ithaca, Long Island, New York City, Rochester, Saratoga Springs, Syracuse and White Plains, as well as Washington D.C., New Haven, Connecticut and Newark, New Jersey.

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