



SENATE CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE

STATE CAPITOL
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA
95814

June 17, 2015

Dear Chairman Nichols:

We the undersigned would like to thank you and your staff for your focus on investing in rural California and providing small school districts the tools they need to improve local air quality and reduce their carbon footprint.

Please accept this letter of support for the 2015-16 Low Carbon Transportation Investments and the Air Quality Improvement Program Funding Plan that proposes \$5 million for school buses in California's rural and small school districts.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, more than half of today's school buses have been in service for over a decade. Unlike many states, California does not require districts to remove buses from service after a defined number of years; as a result, the state has some of the oldest and least fuel efficient fleets in the nation. These older buses emit nearly twice as much pollution per mile as a semi-truck. Consequently, health risks for students- especially younger children- increase significantly because their respiratory systems are still developing.

Students from rural areas are disproportionately impacted because they have longer commutes and limited alternatives to get to and from school.

According to the Legislative Analyst Office, rural school districts transport a significant share of their total student population as compared to larger districts. This means, per capita, more students are exposed to higher forms of pollutants and these same districts have higher proportions of students from low-income families. Moreover, according to the Air Resources Board, all bus-related exposures to exhaust fumes were due to the time spent commuting on the school bus and not the time spent at bus stops or loading and unloading. Exposure to exhaust fumes are known to cause asthma, which affects 6.3 million school children nationally and is the most common long-term childhood disease making newer, cleaner burning buses an urgent priority.

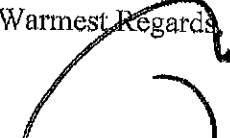
While rural school districts seek to advance environmentally preferred transportation alternatives, these districts are challenged to afford bus replacements because they have less discretionary funding. In many cases, grant opportunities are focused on suburban and urban school districts and smaller districts have no other choice but to keep older buses with higher

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mileage on the road. In addition, rural transportation costs per student are typically higher due to the greater distance rural students are required to travel to and from school. This staff proposal makes a modest, but necessary investment that will have a significant impact on the state's air quality and the health of thousands of California students.

We respectfully ask your support for the staff proposal to fund the next generation of environmentally friendly school buses that will bring positive change to our rural schools and improve the health of our rural students.


Warmest Regards,



Ms. Guire SD 2



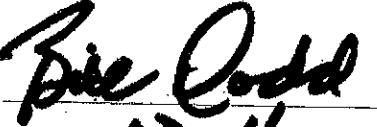
Julie SD 3



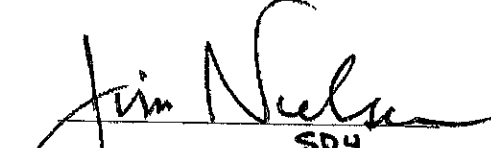
Bob SD 8



Fred SD 1



Eric AD-4



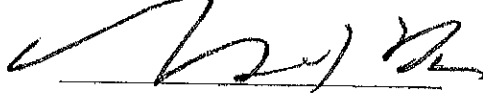
Jim SD 4



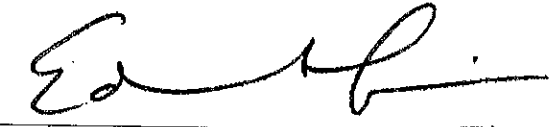
Rick SD 12



Catherine SD 5



Mark SD 6



Ed SLAD

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AD 21

AD 26

 AD 06

 AD 3

Frank Bigelow AD 5

 AD 23

 AD 30

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