



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

2800 BERLIN TURNPIKE, P.O. BOX 317546
NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06131-7546



Office of the
Commissioner

An Equal Opportunity Employer

Public Hearing – March 11, 2009 Committee on Transportation

Testimony Submitted by Commissioner Joseph F. Marie Department of Transportation

H.B. 6650 - An Act Concerning Zero Emission Buses.

The Department of Transportation (DOT) offers the following comments on H.B. 6650, AAC Zero Emission Buses.

DOT currently operates one fuel cell bus in service in the Hartford Division of CTTransit and expects delivery of four new buses powered by Connecticut-made fuel cells in 2009 and 2010 as part of a federal research partnership program.

The Department is concerned about being able to implement the provisions of H.B. 6650 as written. First, is the cost. The Department's current fuel-cell bus cost over \$2,000,000. DOT expects to replace 274 buses between July 1, 2009 and June 30, 2014. If half of those buses are fuel cell powered, the state would be buying 137 fuel cell or pure electric buses at a cost likely to exceed \$250 million for the fuel cell buses and \$50 million for the remaining traditionally-powered buses over the five-year period. We currently have about \$100 million budgeted in total for the 274 buses.

Of further concern, there is currently no significant manufacturing capability that could produce anywhere near the number of buses required by the bill for fuel cell or pure electric buses in the near future. With a bid for the purchase of 136 buses ready to be issued by the end of March, there is no manufacturer who could deliver more than a very small portion of these buses in a timely fashion. There is also no fueling infrastructure available within the state at this time – a cost that would need to be incorporated into this proposal.

Finally, there is the matter of structuring this procurement in order to “encourage federal cost sharing.” Both federal and state purchasing rules inhibit or restrict the specification of brand name products, whether that is a bus manufacturer or a brand of fuel cell. In addition, federal rules for Buy America, and requirements for bus testing, will restrict the number of manufacturers who can build and deliver buses that meet the intent of H.B. 6650 and also meet federal requirements in the near future.

The Department would be very amenable to considering installing stationary fuel cells as a means to disseminate the technology and reduce our overall electricity purchase costs. But the technology for vehicular applications is still not ready for regular transit service.

For further information or questions, please contact Pam Sucato, Legislative Program Manager for the Department of Transportation, at (860) 594-3013.