

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 5446

To establish a program to fund electric public transportation in rural communities.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

DECEMBER 5, 2024

Mr. WELCH introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

A BILL

To establish a program to fund electric public transportation in rural communities.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Electrifying Rural
5 Transportation Act of 2024”.

6 **SEC. 2. RURAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ELECTRIFICA-**
7 **TION PROGRAM.**

8 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

9 (1) ELECTRIC BUS.—The term “electric bus”
10 means a battery-electric or plug-in hybrid bus.

1 (2) ELECTRIC VEHICLE.—The term “electric
2 vehicle”—

3 (A) means a battery-electric or plug-in hy-
4 brid vehicle; and

5 (B) includes an electric bus.

6 (3) ELIGIBLE RECIPIENT.—The term “eligible
7 recipient” means a State or Indian tribe that is eli-
8 gible for a grant under section 5311 of title 49,
9 United States Code.

10 (4) MICROTRANSIT.—The term “micro-
11 transit”—

12 (A) means a technology-enabled service
13 that—

14 (i) uses multi-passenger vehicles to
15 provide shared-ride on-demand services
16 with dynamically generated routing; and

17 (ii) is traditionally provided in a des-
18 ignated service area; and

19 (B) includes service models such as—

20 (i) first mile or last mile connections
21 to fixed route services;

22 (ii) hub to hub zone-based services;

23 (iii) the commingling of ADA com-
24 plementary paratransit services with gen-
25 eral transit service; and

1 (iv) point-to-point service within a
 2 specific zone or geographic area.

3 (5) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
 4 the Secretary of Transportation.

5 (b) GRANT PROGRAM.—The Secretary shall award
 6 grants to eligible recipients, in accordance with the for-
 7 mula under section 5311(c) of title 49, United States
 8 Code, for the electrification of buses, microtransit vehicles,
 9 and other public transportation fleet vehicles.

10 (c) ELIGIBLE PROJECTS.—An eligible recipient may
 11 use a grant received under subsection (b)—

12 (1) to purchase—

13 (A) an electric bus;

14 (B) an electric vehicle, other than an elec-
 15 tric bus, used for microtransit; or

16 (C) charging infrastructure;

17 (2) to renovate a bus facility by upgrading ex-
 18 isting charging infrastructure or adding new charg-
 19 ing infrastructure; or

20 (3) for operating assistance for electric public
 21 transportation, including electric vehicles.

22 (d) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary may
 23 use not more than 5 percent of the amounts made avail-
 24 able to carry out this section for a fiscal year to provide
 25 technical assistance to eligible recipients.

1 (e) WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT TRAINING.—An eli-
 2 gible recipient may use not more than 5 percent of the
 3 amount of a grant received under subsection (b) for work-
 4 force development training for a transit agency in a rural
 5 area, as defined in section 5302 of title 49, United States
 6 Code, including—

7 (1) costs associated with obtaining proper oper-
 8 ating and driving licenses for electric vehicles;

9 (2) the cost of training for operations and
 10 maintenance of electric buses and other electric vehi-
 11 cles; and

12 (3) the cost of training for operations and
 13 maintenance of charging equipment for electric vehi-
 14 cles.

15 (f) APPLICABILITY OF SECTION 5311 REQUIRE-
 16 MENTS.—The requirements under section 5311 of title 49,
 17 United States Code, (other than subsection (f)) shall apply
 18 with respect to a grant awarded under this section in the
 19 same manner as if the grant were awarded under such
 20 section 5311.

21 (g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
 22 authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary to carry
 23 out this section \$500,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2025
 24 through 2029.

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