

California got federal funding for electric buses. Is your town on the list?

By Gillian Brassil

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Your bus could be electric in the near future, thanks to a couple of federal funds.

Some transit and school buses in California are already electric. The California Air Resources Board, which sets state policy on air pollution, mandated in 2018 that California transit bus fleets be zero emission by 2040. All bus purchases in 2029 and after must be battery electric or fuel cell electric, per the mandate.

Federal funds can help in that endeavor. The Federal Transit Authority, part of the U.S. Department of Transportation, announced their allocations for buses from the 2021 fiscal year. More than a dozen California transit agencies would get federal funding to replace old public transit buses:

- The Sacramento Regional Transit District got more than \$5.2 million for replacing older buses generally.
- The Eastern Contra Costa Transit Authority was given almost \$4 million for infrastructure and equipment for electric buses.
- The Napa Valley Transportation Authority got almost \$8.5 million for replacing old buses with electric ones.
- The San Luis Obispo Regional Transit Authority got nearly \$8.8 million for zero-emission buses.
- Los Angeles County's Torrance Transit Department will get almost \$6.3 million for zero-emission buses.
- Riverside got almost \$8.8 million for building hydrogen fueling stations and training staff.
- SunLine Transit Agency will get more than \$8.4 million to purchase hydrogen fuel cell buses and rehabilitate compressed natural gas buses.
- Norwalk's transit system, in LA County, will receive more than \$3.5 million to buy zero-emission buses.
- Santa Rosa's CityBus will receive almost \$4.3 million for battery-electric buses.
- The North County Transit District in Northern San Diego County is getting \$4.8 million for hydrogen fuel cell buses.
- Cerritos will get almost \$4.4 million for electric buses.
- Foothill Transit, which operates in the San Gabriel and Pomona valleys, will receive over \$7.9 million for zero-emission buses.
- The San Joaquin Valley's City of Arvin will get about \$2.9 million for battery-electric buses and a microgrid to power them.
- Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System got about \$4.6 million for replacing old buses generally.

The push for electric public transportation comes through President Joe Biden's national push for green energy. This summer, alongside major automakers, Biden signed an order to have half of new cars sold in the United States by 2030 be battery-electric, fuel cells and plug-in hybrid vehicles.

The Biden administration has often looked to California for clean energy policies. California Gov. Gavin Newsom signed an order in 2020 to have all new cars sold in the state by 2035 be electric. It returned the state's authority to set its own emissions rules for cars this month.

ELECTRIC SCHOOL BUSES IN CALIFORNIA

Terra Bella Union Elementary, Big Sur Unified School District, Center Joint Unified School District and Greenfield Union School District together will get \$980,000 in rebates for 12 cleaner buses.

The money comes as part of the EPA's grantees of the American Rescue Plan and Diesel Emissions Reduction Act's programs for electric school buses. Their funds will offer about \$17 million across the U.S. to replace diesel school buses with electric or hybrid ones.

“The historic investments in clean transportation resulting from President Biden’s leadership will have lasting impacts on protecting clean air for children for generations,” EPA Administrator Michael S. Regan said in an emailed release.

The EPA has set aside over \$73 million to replace more than 3,000 diesel school buses since 2012, with a focus on reaching underserved communities.

And the EPA plans to announce in the coming months a new Clean School Bus Program rebate through the bipartisan infrastructure law that was signed this fall. The law designates \$5 billion over five years to replace diesel school buses with low or zero-emission ones.

In Tulare County, Terra Bella Union Elementary will get \$600,000 for two electric school buses. It comes through American Rescue Plan Electric School Bus Rebates, which reserves \$7 million nationally to buy 23 zero-emission buses and charging infrastructure for underserved communities, tribal entities and private fleets which serve schools in those groups.

Big Sur Unified School District in Monterey County will get \$20,000 for a bus, Center Joint Unified School District in Sacramento County will get \$260,000 for four buses and Greenfield Unified School District in Kern County will get \$100,000 for five buses through the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act School Bus Rebates.

The program awarded about \$10 million nationally this year to replace 444 old diesel school buses with greener ones.