



January 16, 2024

The Honorable Libby Garvey, Chair
Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201

RE: Comments on the Purchase of Battery Electric Buses for ART

Dear Chair Garvey and Members of the County Board:

As you approach an important decision-making point, **we urge you to commit to purchasing only clean battery electric buses (BEB) for all future ART buses.** This is a critically important action for the County to keep on track to meeting its public commitment to transition the County off fossil fuels.

Locally and nationally, bus operators are making the shift to BEBs, including WMATA, Alexandria, DC, Fairfax County, and Montgomery County. With the new ART Operations and Maintenance Facility, designed for battery electric buses (BEBs), moving toward completion in 2025, Arlington should commit to purchasing these buses for all new buses. With short routes, a small area, temperate climate, and steady improvements in battery technology, Arlington is well suited for these buses. Equally beneficial is joining this regional BEB community where common learning, training, equipment, and management lessons can be collectively appreciated as the DMV goes down this road together.

We also urge you not to consider bringing fuel-cell electric buses into this purchasing decision. It is a false choice. Hydrogen fuel cell technology and buses are expensive, unnecessary for Arlington's needs, and distribution networks for green hydrogen to fuel them are simply currently nonexistent. It is the wrong road to enter at this time.

Addressing the climate crisis and achieving the County's goal for carbon neutrality requires that the County Board and Government seek every opportunity to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The shift to quieter and cleaner buses will improve rider experience, air quality and health of residents that rely on ART for their transportation needs. Please make BEBs a starting point for more ambitious efforts to provide more convenient, reliable, and frequent transit and multimodal options for residents to meet Arlington's climate and equity goals. Thank you.

Sincerely,

/s/

Elenor Hodges, Executive Director

Jenn Yates, Chair of the Board of Directors

cc: Mr. Matt de Ferranti, Arlington County Board
Ms. Maureen Coffey, Arlington County Board
Mr. Takis Karantonis, Arlington County Board
Ms. Susan Cunningham, Arlington County Board