

By: Menéndez

S.B. No. 238

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the installment of electric school buses and solar panels in Texas public schools.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

ARTICLE 1: FINDING AND PURPOSE

SECTION 1.01. LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND PURPOSE. The legislature finds that:

(1) The legislature is committed to ensuring federal funding and state resources are equitably allocated to prevent a disaster such as Winter Storm Uri from occurring once again.

(2) The legislature equally commits to reviewing and utilizing efficient methods such as battery storage and dispatchable energy, to the best of its ability to ensure all Texas residents have access to energy in the case of another state disaster.

(3) The legislature finds that public school facilities are in a unique position because of the hours of operation to serve as an energy storage facility. Solar panels can be installed on these public schools and electric school buses may be reliable form for energy to be stored, distributed, and reserved daily and/or dispatched in case of an emergency.

(4) The legislature is committed to appropriating funds to assist in the updated infrastructure of our public schools and to ensure the reliability of the Texas grid.

1           (5) The federal government has created new programs and tax  
2 credits allowing public schools to benefit from the use of electric  
3 school buses and clean energy measures such as solar panels. These  
4 benefits include nearly \$5 billion dollars to replace school buses  
5 with electric models. Additionally, there are at least 51 Texas  
6 projects amounting to \$164 million that have been waitlisted,  
7 demonstrating a strong interest and need for assistance in applying  
8 for these methods.

9           (6) The legislature understands that in a state of disaster  
10 public schools may be able to serve as an emergency shelter because  
11 of the storage generated by the electric school buses and solar  
12 panels on public schools.

13           ARTICLE 2: USE OF THE STATE ENERGY CONSERVATION OFFICE

14           SECTION 2. Sec. 447.002. and 447.003., Government Code, is  
15 amended to read as follows:

16           Sec. 447.002. INFORMATION; PROCEDURES AND RULES; MEASURES  
17 AND PROGRAMS. (a) The state energy conservation office shall  
18 develop and provide energy and water conservation information for  
19 the state.

20           (b) The state energy conservation office may establish  
21 procedures and adopt rules relating to the development and  
22 implementation of energy and water conservation measures and  
23 programs applicable to state buildings and facilities.

24           (c) A procedure established or a rule adopted under  
25 Subsection (b) may include provisions relating to:

26           (1) the retrofitting of existing state buildings and  
27 facilities with energy-saving or water-saving devices; ~~and~~

1           (2) the energy-related or water-related renovation of  
2 those buildings and facilities; and

3           (3) assistance to public school districts to submit  
4 applications for federal and state funding for the installation and  
5 purchase of electric school buses and solar panels in public  
6 schools.

7           Sec. 447.003. LIAISON TO FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. The state  
8 energy conservation office is the state liaison to the federal  
9 government for the implementation and administration of federal  
10 programs relating to state agency energy matters. The office shall  
11 administer state programs established under:

12           (1) Part D, Title III, Energy Policy and Conservation Act  
13 (42 U.S.C. Section 6321 et seq.), and its subsequent amendments;

14           (2) Part G, Title III, Energy Policy and Conservation Act  
15 (42 U.S.C. Section 6371 et seq.), and its subsequent amendments;  
16 and

17           (3) other federal energy conservation programs including the  
18 Inflation Reduction Act and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs  
19 Act, and other state sources of funding as assigned to the office by  
20 the governor or the legislature.

21           SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2023.