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Congress of the United States
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Mr. Matthew Welbes, Acting Administrator
Federal Transit Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

July 5, 2017

Dear Mr. Welbes,

I write to share with you my strong support for an application by the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) for funding through the Low or No (Low-No) Emission Vehicle Program, for the second phase of its all-electric bus plan to serve Pinellas County, Florida, which I have the honor to represent.

Last March I had the opportunity to spend a morning at PSTA and to learn about the agency's commitment to an all-electric bus fleet. PSTA is the sole provider of mass transit services to our community and as we discussed during my visit, it is the perfect site for an all-electric bus fleet. Pinellas is the most densely populated county in Florida, so air quality is important to our residents.

The PSTA Board recognizes the community's support for the environment and has spoken out strongly in support of more environmentally-friendly transit options. The proposal submitted to FTA is fiscally responsible and only seeks federal support for the cost difference between the purchase of BYD all-electric buses and standard Gillig clean-diesel models. The application also requests funding for an on route charging station and depot charging infrastructure for 11 electric buses. These investments will allow for implementation of the next phases in a long-term plan to deploy electric buses on routes throughout the county. PSTA already has purchased vehicles for the first phase of the plan. Though undersized for its population and service area, PSTA has a history of innovative programs and exceptional customer satisfaction. The routes that will be served by the electric buses will connect low income and minority communities to jobs and essential healthcare services. The primary route that would be served by buses purchased through the Low-No Program will serve two Community Redevelopment Areas and provide residents with access to more than 33,000 jobs in Pinellas County's largest employment center.

Leaders of national, state and county environmental organizations have petitioned PSTA to make replacing aging diesel buses with electric vehicles a top priority. Federal support of an expansion of the deployment of a fleet of electric buses would do much to meet these needs.

For these reasons, it is my hope that you will give the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority's Low-No application every possible consideration.

Sincerely,



Charlie Crist
United States Congressman (FL-13)