

Clean Bus Testimony

Brooke Roper

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Minnesota Senate Energy, Utilities, Environment, and Climate
Room 1150 Minnesota Senate Bldg
95 University Ave. W.
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Chair Frenztz, and Senate Energy, Utilities, Environment, and Climate Members:

It is my pleasure to be here today to provide this important testimony to the committee and would like to thank you for this opportunity.

My name is Brooke Roper, and I am the parent of Cory (CJ) and Brooklyn Roper and a supporter of the MN350.

During the Winter of 2022, my husband and I experienced paralyzing fear when our 4-year-old son, CJ began experiencing trouble breathing out of the blue. He was immediately taken to Children's emergency room, where doctors believe that it was the reaction to the "sick" bug that had been going around impacting children. We took CJ home and monitored him extremely closely. A few months later, CJ had a similar breathing incident, and doctors began to suspect Asthma. It was not until the third incident that doctors diagnosed CJ with Asthma.

As a mother, and Asthma survivor myself, I am committed to ensuring that my son's asthma remains well-controlled and managed responsibly. Although CJ does not ride the bus consistently, he has ridden the bus for field trips and activities, and I immediately noticed the difference in his breathing when he inhaled the heavy fumes from the bus. My husband Cory and I are very hesitant about putting him on the school bus as a primary mode of transportation for the next school year, as CJ is eager to ride the bus with his friends.

We have the shared responsibility of ensuring that our students have the chance to breathe clean air. Diesel has a huge impact on existing health conditions such as Asthma, and Minnesota's K-12 student population is exposed daily to harmful diesel emissions to and from school. These emissions also harm drivers and school employees. It is even worse for students of marginalized communities who are already disproportionately exposed to high levels of air pollution.

According to recent national data from the American Lung Association, Black people are [42% more likely](#) than whites to have asthma and have a mortality rate from asthma [2.8 times](#) that of white people. Electrifying school buses will help reduce this disparity. In Minnesota, zip codes with the largest percentage of minority residents had more than five times the rate of asthma emergency room visits related to air pollution compared to areas with more white residents according to the [2022 Life and Breath report](#) by the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA).

If Minnesota is committed to ensuring it is the 'best state' for kids; it's time to prioritize electrifying our school bus fleet and safeguarding clean air for our children and communities. Along with free meals, let's please prioritize air free of harmful toxins for our children and school employees by supporting SF 2993.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Brooke Roper
920 Feltl Ct
Hopkins MN 55343