

Addenda #37 – April 2026 Update

Re: Ch. 8, 2050 Net-Zero Emissions; Impossible!!

SDG 7 - Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

SDG 3 – Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

SDG 17 – Strengthen the means of implementation

The background:

In April 2022, New York legislators approved the 2022-23 State Budget, which included a requirement that all student transportation must be done with zero-emission vehicles by 2035. This was a proposal first introduced by Governor Kathy Hochul in her 2022 State of the State address. Under the new law, all purchases or leases of new vehicles by school districts for pupil transportation must be zero-emission by July 1, 2027, and the districts entire fleet must be converted to zero-emission by 2035. Districts had the option to request a two year delay for beginning purchases of electric buses, but the 2035 mandate end date would remain. Republican legislators have attempted to amend the original mandate, giving school districts the opportunity to do a study to see if electric buses would be financially and logistically realistic on a case-by-case basis, after the experiences of several school districts with electric buses were made public.

The Fayetteville-Manlius school district in Central New York sent out a newsletter in May 2025, which included the results of two trial runs with an electric bus in cold weather conditions, something we see frequently in Central New York winter months. The article was titled, *F-M conducts trial runs with electric buses; Performance falls short of expectations*. The study noted the reduction in battery range from due to running heaters to keep the equipment and students from freezing in extreme weather conditions. The study also noted the difficulty mechanics had recharging electric buses outdoors in cold weather, which resulted in the charger circuit breaker tripping multiple times.

In December 2025, parents of children in the Lake Shore Central School District in Western New York, raised concerns about their children coming home freezing after getting off the bus in the winter weather. Children told parents the bus driver said they couldn't run the heaters "because it drains the battery."

The Naples Central School District in West-Central New York published a Community Update on its website in March 2026, stating that while its electric buses perform well on most days, it would be "impractical and frankly impossible" to transition to a full fleet of electric buses. "What cannot be ignored, however, is that these EV buses also present challenges and have proven to be limiting in numerous ways." NCSD Superintendent Kevin Schwartz and Transportation Director Pat Elwell noted that operating the EV buses "do drive up electric costs when factoring in regular charging, increased utility costs, delivery costs, and the necessity to charge during the day (peak time thus higher rates) when it is cold." And said that "daily operation of an EV bus is 3-5x more expensive than a diesel bus" during these periods. The letter went on to address the cost of purchasing an electric bus

versus a diesel bus. “When we acquired our buses through the EPA grant in 2023, the cost was for each bus was \$390,000. Today, a similarly equipped EV bus costs sit at \$435,485 and \$481,472 (for a larger EV battery option requiring level 3 charging). This is of great concern given the cost of a diesel bus in 2023 was \$150,630 and is currently \$167,784.” The letter ended with this statement, “Naples CSD has applied for the available two-year EV bus waiver and as such has no plans for further EV purchases at this point in time. It is our hope that NYS considers significant changes with this mandate or potential repeal given the realities around EV bus implementation that are now abundantly clear.”

On March 27th superintendents and transportation administrators from school districts in the ‘North Country’ met at the Queensbury Union Free School District to hear a presentation about how school districts that have already participated in New York’s EV bus program have fared in its first year. Administrators said that overall, the EV bus program is a good idea, but the technology just isn’t ready for full fleet transformation yet. “It’s costing more in electric; it’s costing more in the cost of the bus, it’s costing more in terms of what we have to put in for infrastructure, it’s just costing more and all of that’s paid for in taxpayer dollars,” said Scott Whittemore superintendent for business at Queensbury. The district’s electric bill increased by 23 percent between 2024 and 2025 after it added four electric buses to its grid. The excessive consumption of electricity resulted in a letter from National Grid, stating the district would be placed at a level-3 “large general service” classification, resulting in significantly higher prices per kilowatt hour of electricity consumed. Queensbury supervisor of transportation mechanics Dan Miller noted that when electric bus batteries reach a remaining power level of 10 percent, they enter “Turtle Mode,” a safety feature that shuts down all non-essential components, including heat, to sustain the batteries. The maximum speed in Turtle Mode is just 20-35 miles per hour, transporting the bus and its occupants under extreme weather conditions.

New York Senate Republicans recently introduced an amendment to fully repeal New York’s electric school bus mandate, but it was voted down in the State Senate on March 24, 2026. All 63 Democrats voted against the bill. Now, with just one year left until the beginning of the programs implementation, fewer than seven hundred of the state’s fleet of 45,000 diesel and gas school buses have been replaced with electric buses. The problem is not just with the cost of the buses themselves but the infrastructure that is required to keep the buses charged and maintained.

The Penfield Central School District in Rochester, NY celebrated the grand opening of its 41,016-square-foot, two-story transportation and facilities center in August 2025. The project, originally presented to district residents in November 2021, noted that the districts transportation operations had outgrown the current facility and a new one needed to be built. The budget for construction of the maintenance facility, storage building, new diesel fuel station and bus parking for its 86 bus fleet, was listed as \$29.551 million. This was after district residents had approved the purchase of land for the site in May 2021.

The West Genesee Central School District in Camillus, NY recently voted down a similar project. It was the second rejection of the 35,400 square foot transportation and facilities center, the first rejection by 37 votes last December and the second by a resounding 480 votes on March 25. As with the Penfield project, the West Genesee presentation highlighted an aging, outdated and too small maintenance garage with cramped working areas, limited parking, high volumes of traffic and the need to provide electrical infrastructure for the eventual purchase of electric buses. This Capital Project also followed a similar land purchase in December 2023, in order to obtain enough space for construction of the Transportation Center. Using the price per square foot of the Penfield Central School District transportation center, and factoring in the additional cost for the “bus loop” exit to Kasson Road and one year material and labor cost inflation, West Genesee’s new transportation facility would have cost West Genesee district taxpayers somewhere in the neighborhood of \$32 million. The total cost including interest on \$10.8 million financed, made the total project cost \$39.2 million. And that did not include the cost of charging equipment for the district’s 97 buses or the electrical wiring and labor to install and connect them. The budget for charging equipment and installation for the Penfield project was listed at \$1.393 million for 86 buses 3-1/2 years ago, making the estimated future cost for *this* phase in excess of \$1.7 million. In all, West Genesee Central School District taxpayers would have to pay out \$40.9 million to build the facilities and charging infrastructure to support the districts fleet of 97 electric school buses.

Note: The Administration and school board emphasized that 62.46% of the total cost was covered by NY State Building Aid and an additional 3.85% was funded from the district Capital Reserve Fund. News flash!!! It was our state income tax dollars that created the State Building Aid fund. It was our school tax dollars that created the Capital Reserve Fund. West Genesee Central School District residents would have paid 100% of the cost of the new transportation center if it had been approved.

Once the school district pays for the cost of improvements to support electric buses, there is the cost of actually purchasing the buses themselves. Each year, school districts across the state submit propositions along with school year budgets, to purchase new school buses as part of district fleet replacement plans. Beginning next year, these proposals will be for the purchase of electric buses instead of diesel buses. Scott Whittemore, superintendent for business at the Queensbury school district estimated that taxpayers would have to approve spending more than three times the current \$1.3 million per year on bus purchases, in order to meet the 2035 electrification mandate. Each year the West Genesee Central School District includes a proposal to purchase ten new buses as part of its ten-year fleet replacement plan. This year, the 2026-2027 budget includes a proposition not to exceed \$2,004,000 to purchase ten new buses, a stake rack truck and a dump truck. The bus portion of the proposal will cost around \$1.7 million for the ten new diesel buses. If the district had to purchase ten new electric buses, that cost would explode to around \$4.5 million for that same proposal.

The administration and school board will bring this project up for a vote in the future, even though the superintendent stated he would not if it was defeated for the second time. He/they have no option other than to build the transportation center in order to support the fleet transition to electric buses. The only other alternative is for New York legislators to eliminate the mandate, which the progressive Democrat leadership of both houses refuses to consider. The next best possible outcome is approval of a current proposal that would push back the final compliance date by five years, with new electric bus purchases beginning in 2032 and the full fleet conversion deadline moving to 2040.

Voters in dozens of school districts have rejected proposals to purchase electric buses over the past two years. Despite local resistance, the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) says the transition is moving forward.

*U.N. Agenda 2030 and New Yorks Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act
were never about saving the planet.*

*U.N. Agenda 2030 and New Yorks Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act
were never about public health and safety.*

They were always about CONTROL!