



100% emissions-free future

**Croton100 Opposes Croton Harmon School District's  
Proposition 3 (Transportation Bond) on the June 9 School Ballot**

**Frequently Asked Questions and Answers**

**Q1. What is Croton100?**

A1. Croton100 is an all-volunteer community-based organization that seeks to reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions in Croton-on-Hudson, NY (zip code 10520), to net zero by 2040. Our goal is 5% reduction per year from 2020 to 2040. We will reach this goal through a combination of advocacy, education and campaigns to help Croton residents choose a lifestyle with zero or very low emissions. Visit our [website](#) to learn more about us.

**Q2. What is Proposition 3?**

A2. Proposition 3 is a transportation bond proposal on the [Croton Harmon Union Free School District's June 9 Ballot](#). The Proposition asks voters for approval for the School to borrow \$225,000 to purchase "various vehicles" to accomplish routine upgrades to its transportation fleet. Although Proposition 3 itself does not specify the vehicles to be purchased, the School says the budget includes a plan to purchase a gasoline Bluebird Vision bus (65 passenger), a gasoline Chevy van (34 passenger) and a Chrysler Pacifica plug-in/hybrid (7 passenger).

**Q3. What is Croton100's position on Proposition 3?**

A3. Croton100 opposes Proposition 3 because most of the money borrowed is planned for a gas bus purchase.

**Q4. What is Croton100's position on the overall School budget?**

A4. Croton100 takes no position on the School District's proposed budget of \$49,424,525.

**Q5. When and how will voters be able to vote NO to Proposition 3?**

A5. Proposition 3 will be one of the items on the general School District Ballot that must be received by the School District by 5:00 p.m. June 9, 2020. Because of the coronavirus pandemic, the ballot will be by mail, rather than in-person voting. The School recommends voters allow for 3 business days for mailing. Croton100 urges all voters in the Croton School District to consult the [School's website](#) and the [Westchester County Board of Elections](#) for the most up to date and accurate information about the logistics of the vote.

**Q6. Why does Croton100 oppose the purchase of a gas bus?**

A6. The School’s plan to purchase another gas bus to upgrade its 44-vehicle fleet that currently runs on 100% fossil fuel and emits approximately 500 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> from its 400,000 annual miles of transportation does not adequately weigh the harm to our atmosphere as a factor in this decision.

Croton100 opposes the purchase of a gasoline bus because it will add about 200 tons of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere over a 12-year life of the bus. CO<sub>2</sub> is a greenhouse gas that stays in the atmosphere for decades and causes global warming. This is very problematic because the [world’ leading scientists](#) have explained that we must reduce net carbon emissions by 50% by 2030 and 100% by 2040 if we are to avoid catastrophic impacts of climate change. The scientific community has further explained that swift CO<sub>2</sub> reduction is critically important. Reducing carbon emissions at a rate of 5% per year requires rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes. Purchasing a new gas bus is in conflict with the scientific information about actions we must take now to reduce the accumulation of GHGs.

Purchasing a gas bus now is also in conflict with the goals to cut carbon emissions on schedule with New York State’s recently enacted Community Leadership and Climate Protection Act of 2020.

Additionally, Croton100 opposes buying a gas bus because it will add harmful particulate pollution to the air that the children using the bus and others in the vicinity of the bus will breathe. This is especially problematic because Westchester County’s air quality falls below federal clean air standards (specifically, Westchester is a non-attainment zone for [National Ambient Air Quality Standards](#)).

For over a century, critical decisions such as this purchase have not considered environmental harm as a first-order metric and this has to change. The school does not publish its carbon budget, does not give carbon a seat at the table for important decisions such as this one and has not published a plan and roadmap to decarbonize.

**Q7. What is the alternative to a gas bus?**

A7. The School District can buy an electric bus rather than a gas bus.

**Q8. How far is the range of an electric bus and how long does it take to charge?**

A8. An electric bus has a range of 100-150 miles, depending on the make and model. It takes about 4 hours to fully charge a bus battery with a level 2 charger.

**Q9. Do electric vehicles have mechanical design features that make them safer than their gas counterparts?**

A9. Yes. In addition to being safer because they do not emit particulate pollution and greenhouse gases that cause global warming, electric vehicles are generally safer than their internal combustion counterparts. One reason is because heavy batteries are beneath the vehicle, so the center of gravity is lower. Another is modern electronics and safety systems. All

electric buses have regenerative braking. As soon as the driver takes his or her foot off the “go pedal” (electric buses don’t have “gas pedals”!), regenerative braking kicks in. Other than harnessing energy from the braking process to improve efficiency, regenerative braking contributes to stability and safety, particularly in a slippery downhill drive.

**Q10. Do electric buses have cabin comfort features like their gas counterparts?**

A10. Yes. Electric buses have comfort features, like cabin heating, air conditioning and appropriate seating, just like their gas counterparts. Electric buses incorporate the most advanced systems. Like other vehicles, electric buses come with warranties that provide assurances that the features of the bus will perform as specified in the purchase contract.

**Q11. Is an electric bus more expensive than a gas bus?**

A11. No, over the life of a bus, an electric bus is not more expensive than a gas bus. An electric bus has a higher purchase price than a gas bus even after subsidies, but an electric bus is less expensive to maintain and run. An electric bus does not require oil changes and has fewer moving parts, which reduces wear and tear that occurs in a gas bus. An electric bus also has a longer life because it has fewer mechanical parts that wear down which can be expensive to repair. Additionally, because an electric motor is 3 to 5 times more efficient than a fossil fuel (internal combustion) engine, an electric bus uses less energy. And, because electricity is less expensive than gas, an electric bus is much less expensive to run.

The additional upfront cost of an electric bus over a gas bus is about 0.2% of the School’s overall \$49,424,525 budget. Given the health and greenhouse gas reduction benefits of an electric bus and the long-term financial payback, Croton100 believes that the purchase of an electric bus is both feasible and the right thing to do.

**Q12. How could the School pay for the higher purchase price of an electric bus?**

A12. There are grants available from a variety of sources to help offset the higher purchase price of an electric bus. These sources include funds that specifically apply for the replacement of carbon emitting vehicles with electric vehicles through the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA). NYSERDA administers Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality grants, which are available for electric school buses in Westchester County because our air quality falls below federal clean air standards. Con Edison also has funding support for electric charging station infrastructure.

There is also a high likelihood that funds in the Volkswagen Settlement Fund will be available to the School to more fully cover the incremental purchase price of an electric bus over a gas bus at the end of this summer or perhaps early fall.

The school could also use the money it has saved from not burning gas and diesel while the entire transportation fleet has been unexpectedly in storage over the last three months of the school year. This “coronavirus dividend” could help fund the purchase of an electric bus. Or the school could forego one of the other vehicles in the bond proposition to cover the incremental cost of an electric bus.

**Q13. Would a charging station for an electric bus require additional expense, space or wiring?**

A13. A charging station is smaller than a gas pump and is a routine type of electrical upgrade. Several charging stations have been installed on municipal property in Croton, and there are about 100 electric vehicle charging stations in homes throughout Croton. The wiring for an electric bus is a connection that can use a Type 2, 240-volt charger with 65 amps, which is similar to some residential home chargers. Planning for a charging station with installation can be completed in a few days to a couple of weeks. An electric bus does not require additional space, although it does require an allotted space adjacent to the charger. Compared to the approximately 5,000 gallons of diesel storage the School maintains, electric charging stations would be a safer fuel source for its vehicles. Best of all, funding of \$4,000 is available to install a charging station under the [New York Charge Ready](#) program.

**Q14. Would the transition to an electric bus require significant technology-related adjustments by users?**

A14. No. Electric vehicles do not require significant technology related adjustments. Determining a suitable fit of a vehicle for our community should not be an insurmountable challenge. School buses, like all vehicles, have industry standards with specifications clearly explained. There are no special skills needed to drive an electric vehicle. There are over a hundred electric vehicles registered in Croton. Croton residents have begun the transition to electric vehicles; the School District should also make the transition now. The White Plains school district has been using 5 electric school buses for over 2 years.

**Q15. What about the other two vehicles covered by Proposition 3?**

A15. Croton100 applauds the School for its plan to buy a Chrysler Pacifica plug-in/hybrid 7 passenger van. However, this is insufficient action to meet the 5% carbon reduction imperative. The two largest vehicles covered by Proposition 3 (the 65-passenger bus and the 34-passenger van) are fully gasoline-fueled vehicles. Collectively, these three vehicles will emit at least 300 tons of carbon dioxide over the next 12 years.

**Q16. Has Croton100 done anything to participate constructively in the bus purchase deliberations with the School?**

A16. Yes. Croton100 spoke against the purchase of a gas bus in public hearings, submitted written comments, provided written materials about the harmful impact of carbon emitting buses and provided information about concrete funding options to purchase an electric bus.

**Q17. Why is the School planning to buy a gas bus rather than an electric bus?**

A17. The School did not adequately explore options with a variety of electric bus vendors, research funding sources, or most importantly, plan the transportation budget and Proposition 3 appropriately to purchase an electric bus.

**Q18. What could happen if Proposition 3 passes?**

A18. As it stands now, if Proposition 3 passes the School plans to use the funds to buy a gas bus and other carbon emitting vehicles. However, even if Proposition 3 were approved by voters, the Proposition itself does not require the School to buy the three specific vehicles they have said they plan to buy with the \$225,000. The Proposition simply allocates funds to purchase “various vehicles.” Croton100 hopes that even if Proposition 3 passes, the School will not purchase a gas bus, but instead could still be persuaded to buy an electric bus. Despite pleas from Croton100 and members of the community, the School has not committed to forego the plan to purchase a gas bus. Instead, the School has decided to plan to buy a gas bus and put the request to borrow \$225,000 for “various vehicles” to be used at its discretion before the voters.

**Q.19. What could happen if Proposition 3 does not pass?**

A19. If voters reject the transportation bond request in Proposition 3, the School would receive a strong message from the community that it must immediately transition the School’s fleet from carbon emitting vehicles to clean transportation and take other action to meet carbon reduction imperatives. If Proposition 3 does not pass, the School will not have an additional \$225,000 in transportation funds to supplement its overall planned budget of \$49,424,525 (the overall planned budget is also subject to voter approval, Croton100 takes no position on the general budget on the ballot). It is likely that this would defer the purchase of any new bus and require the School to continue using the fleet it currently has rather than proceeding with its routine fleet upgrade now, increasing the chances of a future electric bus purchase. The bus the School wants to replace, a 2006 model with 80,000 miles, would not be rendered inherently unsafe between the 2019-2020 school year and the 2020-2021 year. All school buses comply with New York State safety requirements as attested by inspection certification. The School has not identified any specific safety concerns about the vehicles slated to be replaced. Nor has it explained why, if there are safety deficiencies, they could not be addressed by remedial action rather than buying a new gas bus.

Most importantly, the defeat of Proposition 3 would halt the purchase of another gas bus. The School could use the delay in available funds to plan to purchase an electric bus in the next round of budgeting. While this possible outcome is not ideal for upgrading the transportation fleet or the urgent need to transition to electric buses, Croton100 believes that unless the School commits to purchasing an electric bus rather than another gas bus, its request for an additional \$225,000 in transportation funds should not be approved by voters.

**Q20. Why aren’t the School’s statements that it is committed to sustainable action sufficient?**

A20. We need actions rather than statements. The School’s statements that it is committed to sustainable actions by forming committees, planning to further study the issue and to pursue funding opportunities for electric buses in the future are insufficient because the world’s leading scientists warn us that global warming impacts require *actions* on a rapid and unprecedented pace. The decisions that are made today to continue carbon emissions

contribute to global warming by lingering in the atmosphere for decades. Collectively, we must reduce carbon emissions by 5% per year. Buying a gas bus rather than an electric bus now will add another 200 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> to the atmosphere over the next 12 years. The climate science is clear that the next ten years are the critically important window of time for CO<sub>2</sub> reductions. Buying another gas bus now is the wrong thing to do because a gas bus will add carbon to the atmosphere during a time when we must reduce emissions of global warming gases – it takes us in the wrong direction.

The School's plan to purchase another gas bus to add to its 44-vehicle fleet that currently runs on 100% fossil fuels and emits approximately 500 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> from its 400,000 annual miles of transportation is not a meaningful sustainability policy.

Using diesel and gasoline buses are not the most environmentally sound way of transporting students. Croton100 appreciates the School's starter steps, but the School's consideration of carbon emissions in its transportation policy is limited to *de minimis* actions such as restricting idling of fossil fuel vehicles, optimizing transportation routes, encouraging the use of buses rather than individual vehicles, and encouraging students to walk or bike to school. These policies, while important, do not give carbon a meaningful seat at the table. They are far too little for the carbon reduction imperatives we need to meet.

**Q21. What is the spirit of Croton100's campaign to oppose Proposition 3?**

A21. This is a honey-themed opposition campaign. Although Croton100 strongly opposes Proposition 3, it believes the most effective way to communicate our position is through respectful communications, education and advocacy. Croton100 plans to continue to work collaboratively with the School on the goal of transitioning its fleet to electric vehicles, along with other carbon reduction actions in rapid and unprecedented ways as required by the scientific information and the carbon emission reduction goals in New York State law. Croton100 values the public service of the School District's dedicated members of the Board of Education, management team, staff, and teachers. Croton100 is committed to work constructively on this campaign and with all members of the community, its partners, businesses and public facilities to reduce carbon emissions in zip code 10520 by 50% by 2030 and 100% by 2040.

**Q22. What should people who oppose Proposition 3 do?**

A22.

- Vote No to Proposition 3.
- Remember that Croton100 takes no position on the overall budget on the ballot.
- Participate in Croton100's voter education campaign by acting urgently, before ballots will be returned to election officials, allowing for at least 3 business days for mailing (on or before June 4).
- Share this FAQ document with other residents of the Croton School District.
- Write respectful letters to the editor of the Gazette and other publications (best practice to coordinate your effort with Croton100's Letters to the Editor Team Leader Rob Abbot ([abbotcif@aol.com](mailto:abbotcif@aol.com))).

- Post your respectful opposition to Proposition 3 on social media.
- Promote Croton100's campaign with friends.
- Donate to Croton100 to help fund its campaign to oppose Proposition 3 and other initiatives.
- Visit our [website](#) to learn more and connect with us through the "Get Involved" tab.