



Legislation Text

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080323
SUBSTITUTE 1

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Substitute resolution requesting the Federal Transit Administration to permit \$91.5 million in federal funds designated for transit improvements in Milwaukee to be used for the purchase of hydrogen fuel-cell buses and/or battery-electric buses.

This resolution requests the Federal Transit Administration to permit the \$91.5 million in unspent federal funds designated for transit improvements in Milwaukee (i.e., for implementation of the recommendations of the Milwaukee Connector study) to be used for the purchase of hydrogen fuel-cell buses and/or battery-electric buses.

Whereas, \$91.5 million in federal funds appropriated in 1991 for public transit improvements in Milwaukee remain unspent due to the inability of local leaders to reach an agreement on how this money should be used; and

Whereas, The purchasing power of these unspent funds is diminished with each passing year; and

Whereas, According to the recent Public Policy Forum report *Milwaukee County's Transit Crisis: how did we get here and what do we do now?*, since 2001, nearly \$40 million of the Milwaukee County Transit System's \$44 million reserve of federal capital funds have been used to fill holes in MCTS' operating budget, rather than for capital improvements such as the purchase of new buses; and

Whereas, Use of federal capital funds by MCTS to purchase new buses fell steadily from \$13.3 million in 2001 to barely \$2 million in 2006, with no bus purchases whatsoever in 2007 and 2008; and

Whereas, MCTS has extended its typical 12-year bus replacement cycle to 14 years for 150 buses in its fleet to allow continued use of federal capital dollars for the MCTS operating budget in 2008 and 2009, but has indicated that it will need to replace these buses over a 3-year period beginning in 2010 at a cost of \$56 million; and

Whereas, Hydrogen fuel-cell buses and battery-electric buses are zero-tailpipe-emission vehicles that, when used in a public transit fleet, can help improve local air quality; and

Whereas, Replacement of diesel buses with hydrogen fuel-cell buses and/or battery-electric buses can help reduce America's dependence on foreign oil; and

Whereas, Since 2007, hydrogen fuel-cell buses have been successfully put into service in Oakland, California (AC Transit) and Palm Springs, California (SunLine Transit) and have been well-received by the transit-riding public because they are clean, quiet and emission-free; and

Whereas, Battery-electric buses have been in operation for several years in Santa Barbara, California (Santa Barbara Metropolitan Transit District; 1991), Chattanooga, Tennessee (Chattanooga Area

Regional Transportation Authority; 1992) and Mobile, Alabama (Wave Transit; 2001), have been similarly well-received by the public because of their quiet, zero-tailpipe-emission operation, and have led to transit ridership growth in these communities; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, By the Common Council of the City of Milwaukee, that the Federal Transit Administration is requested to permit the unspent \$91.5 million in federal funds designated for transit improvements in Milwaukee to be used for the purchase of hydrogen fuel-cell buses and/or battery-electric buses; and, be it

Further Resolved, That the City Clerk shall send copies of this resolution to Federal Transit Administration Administrator James S. Simpson and Regional Administrator (Region 5) Marisol Simon.

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