

Alberto M. Carvalho, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: EXPLORE THE FEASIBILITY OF IMPLEMENTING A PILOT PROGRAM OF COMPRESSED NATURAL GAS (CNG) SCHOOL BUSES AND DEVELOPMENT OF A CNG FUELING DEPOT

COMMITTEE: INNOVATION, EFFICIENCY & GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

LINK TO STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK: FINANCIAL EFFICIENCY/STABILITY

In order to identify additional cost-saving opportunities, and in accordance with the District's Zero Carbon Footprint initiative, staff has recommended exploring options for transitioning District-owned fleet vehicles to those that are environmentally friendly and more energy efficient. Miami-Dade County Public Schools currently operates over 1300 school buses and transports approximately 65,000 students daily. Annually, the District spends approximately \$6.8 million on diesel fuel.

According to the U. S. Department of Energy, a Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) powered school bus, on average, displaces 1400 gallons of diesel fuel per year at a per gallon cost up to 25 percent less, while significantly reducing harmful emissions into the environment. In addition, CNG is an abundant natural resource available in the United States and its widespread use could help to reduce our nation's dependence on foreign oil.

There are, however, potential limitations to the deployment of CNG buses locally, including a lack of existing refueling stations, potential cost to convert transportation maintenance depots, and higher initial cost of a CNG bus over a diesel-powered vehicle.

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services has announced the availability of grant funding, valued at up to \$1.2 million, for Florida school districts to expand the use of compressed natural gas as a transportation fuel through increased deployment of CNG buses. This opportunity, coupled with potential long-term fuel cost savings, warrants the exploration of the feasibility of implementing, at a minimum, a pilot program for the deployment of CNG vehicles. Further, there may be a potential revenue-generating opportunity associated with the development of CNG refueling facilities, which could serve not only District-owned fleet vehicles, but those of other governmental and commercial fleets as well.

RECOMMENDED: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, endorse the exploration of the feasibility of implementing a pilot program of compressed natural gas (CNG) school buses and development of a CNG fueling depot.