

Media Release

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Contact: Katie Geer
803-737-5913

Gov. Henry McMaster, Superintendent Molly Spearman, SCDOI Director Ray Farmer Announce \$24.54 Million Investment in School Buses, Public Transit

Second Round of Volkswagen Settlement Funds to Purchase 235 New School Buses, 3 Public Transit Buses

COLUMBIA, S.C. – Governor Henry McMaster was joined today by S.C. Superintendent of Education Molly Spearman and S.C. Department of Insurance (SCDOI) Director Ray Farmer to announce that the second round of funding from the state’s share of the Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Trust will be invested in 235 new, propane fueled buses to update the state’s aging school bus fleet.

The funds will also purchase three electric transit buses to be used in Charleston and Florence. Representatives from the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments and the Pee Dee Regional Transportation Authority, which will receive funding for electric transit buses, were also in attendance.

“Today marks an important day for our state,” said Gov. Henry McMaster. “Director Farmer and his team accepted an immense challenge in determining how these funds should be invested to benefit as many South Carolinians as possible, and they have exceeded expectations. Because of today’s announcement, those in our state who rely on public transit and the children who rely on our school buses will be safer.”

“This announcement shows South Carolina is fully committed to providing the safest, most efficient, and environmentally friendly school buses in the nation,” said State Superintendent of Education Molly Spearman. “Not only will these new propane buses help ensure over 300,000 bus riders get to and from school safely and on time, it will save tax payers millions of dollars while drastically reducing emissions.”

Governor McMaster [appointed](#) the SCDOI as the lead agency for administering the state’s \$34 million allocation under the Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Trust in 2017. In 2019, Governor McMaster [announced](#) that \$9.33 million would be invested to purchase 78 new propane school buses and four clean energy transit buses under the first round of Trust funds.

“This is an important step toward cleaner, safer transportation for South Carolina,” said Director Ray Farmer.

The SCDOI partially funded three of 11 applications. The award recipients are as follows:

1. SC Department of Education

- \$23,635,830 for 235 propane school buses
- The SC Department of Education has committed \$87,400 to build two new propane fueling stations to expand the propane school bus fleet throughout the state



- School districts expected to receive buses include: Aiken, Beaufort, Berkeley, Charleston, Dorchester County School District Two, Greenville, Horry, Lexington School District One, Richland School District One, Richland School District Two, York School District Four

2. Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments

- \$608,000 for 1 electric transit bus for CARTA
- Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments has committed 20% of the funds as a local match
- Will purchase an electric bus manufactured in SC from Proterra
- Leveraging existing charging infrastructure for charging the bus

3. Pee Dee Regional Transportation Authority

- \$295,500 for 2 electric transit buses + charging infrastructure
- Pee Dee Regional Transportation Authority will apply for federal funds to cover 85% of the costs of the buses and charging infrastructure
- These will be the first electric transit buses for the PDRTA

Additional information about the Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Trust is available at doi.sc.gov/vwsettlement.

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