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American Samoa Secures \$2.6 Million for Clean School Buses under Biden-Harris Administration’s Investing in America Agenda

The American Samoa Government is proud to announce that our Department of Education has been selected to receive a \$2,555,000 Clean School Bus Program rebate, funded by President Biden’s Investing in America agenda. This substantial rebate will enable the purchase of seven electric school buses, a significant step towards enhancing the health and well-being of our children and communities by reducing harmful air pollution.

Governor Lemanu P. S. Mauga expressed his gratitude for this investment, stating, “American Samoa knows firsthand the effects of climate change. We face rising sea levels and increasingly powerful storms on a daily basis. While we cannot change the course alone, we can do what we can. To further our environmental efforts, American Samoa sought and will receive seven electric school buses thanks to a \$2.5 million allocation from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law under the 2023 Clean School Bus Rebate program. These buses will provide safer, cleaner transportation for our students, significantly improving our territory's environmental quality. This funding signifies our ongoing efforts towards sustainable, zero-emission transportation, benefiting students, staff, and the community by reducing harmful diesel emissions and climate impact.”

EPA’s Pacific Southwest Regional Administrator, Martha Guzman, commented on the initiative, saying, “EPA is proud to take another step in advancing the rollout of electric school buses in American Samoa, helping create a future where our children can breathe cleaner air. I’ve seen firsthand the advantages of these electric buses, with the absence of noxious diesel emissions benefiting students, school staff, and neighboring communities. Thanks to these investments, more electric school buses will be on the road in American Samoa.”

Representative Aumua Amata Coleman Radewagen also highlighted the importance of this funding, stating, “A long-term priority of mine in Congress has been achieving proportional equality with the states in federal funding, so we appreciate this support. Thank you to Administrator Regan and our Region 9 Administrator Martha Guzman, and congratulations to our hard working local Department of Education. The 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which I supported, has directed millions in new funds to American Samoa in various ways each year since it was passed.”

In September 2023, the EPA announced at least \$500 million in available funding nationwide for its 2023 Clean School Bus rebates. After receiving an overwhelming number of applications from school districts nationwide, including from low-income communities, Tribal nations, and U.S. territories, the EPA doubled the initial available funding in this round to nearly \$1 billion.

The rebates will help school districts nationwide purchase over 3,400 clean school buses—92% of which will be electric—to accelerate the transition to zero-emission vehicles and produce cleaner air in and around schools and communities. This third funding round will build on almost \$2 billion in investment from the 2022 Rebates and 2023 Grants to improve air quality in and around schools, reduce greenhouse gas pollution fueling the climate crisis, and help accelerate America’s leadership in developing clean vehicles of the future. To ensure effective implementation, the EPA is partnering with other federal agencies through the Joint Office of Energy and Transportation to provide school districts with robust technical assistance.

The selections will provide funds to school districts in 47 states, Washington D.C., and several federally recognized Tribes and U.S. territories, including American Samoa. School districts in low-income, rural, and Tribal communities comprise approximately 45 percent of these projects and will receive nearly 67 percent of the total funding. This exceeds President Biden’s Justice40 Initiative goal that at least 40 percent of certain federal investments benefit disadvantaged communities that are marginalized, underserved, and overburdened by pollution.

The EPA will also make selections through future funding rounds and other programs. For example, the EPA is accepting the 2024 Clean Heavy-Duty Vehicles Grant Program applications until 11:59 PM ET on July 25, 2024. The program offers up to \$932 million, 70% of which the EPA anticipates awarding to help fund new, zero-emission Class 6 or 7 school buses.

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