

SENATE BILL NO. 3044

(First Reprint)

To the Senate:

Pursuant to Article V, Section I, Paragraph 14 of the New Jersey Constitution, I am returning Senate Bill No. 3044 (First Reprint) with my recommendations for reconsideration.

In August 2022, I was pleased to sign P.L.2022, c.86 (N.J.S.A. 26:2C-8.58), which required the Department of Environmental Protection ("DEP") to develop and implement an Electric School Bus ("ESB") Program. Under the ESB Law, the DEP is to award grants to school districts and school bus contractors for the purchase or lease of electric school buses and electric school bus charging infrastructure. Subject to the availability of funds, the ESB Law requires the DEP to provide \$15 million in grants during each year of the three-year ESB Program. The ESB Law provides that the ESB Program may be funded with federal funding, money appropriated from the General Fund, money from the Clean Energy Fund ("CEF") (which comes from the societal benefit charge paid by utility ratepayers), or proceeds from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative auctions.

At the time I signed the ESB Law, my expectation was that the Legislature would provide a supplemental appropriation of \$15 million from the General Fund in Fiscal Year 2023 to fund the ESB Program. However, that did not happen, and as a result, my colleagues in the Legislature and I revisited the issue as part of our development of the Fiscal Year 2024 State Budget and determined to provide \$15 million in funding from the CEF.

As passed, Senate Bill No. 3044 (First Reprint) would add a provision to the annual appropriations act for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, appropriating \$15 million from the CEF to the DEP for the purposes of supporting the ESB Program. In order to allow these funds to be appropriated in the current State fiscal

year, I am recommending that this bill be amended to add the same provision to P.L.2023, c.74, the annual appropriations act for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, instead of P.L.2022, c.49.

Therefore, I herewith return Senate Bill No. 3044 (First Reprint) and recommend that it be amended as follows:

<u>Page 2, Title, Line 2:</u>	Delete "2023, P.L.2022, c.49" and insert "2024, P.L.2023, c.74"
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<u>Page 2, Section 1, Line 26:</u>	Delete "P.L.2022, c.49" and insert "P.L.2023, c.74"
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<u>Page 2, Section 1, Line 27:</u>	Delete "2023" and insert "2024"
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[seal]

Respectfully,

/s/ Philip D. Murphy

Governor

Attest:

/s/ Parimal Garg

Chief Counsel to the Governor