Alternative Fuels Workgroup Meeting Notes

Meeting #3

9/16/2026

Attending:

DEEP: Tracy Babbidge, Acting Deputy Commissioner of Environmental Quality, Paul Farrell, Wade Packer, Nicole Foertsch

Returning members: David Kallander (DPH), Donald DeVivo (DATTCO), Blaize Levitan (Branford Public Schools), Floyd Vergara (CFAA), Brian Zepka (WRI), Alice Kwak (WRI), Craig Peters (CTC), Chris Herb (CEMA), Elias Petersen (Kolmar), Joel Stutheit (PERC), Todd Mouw (ROUSH), Brian Morris (UI), Paul Wessel, Rick Rosa (UI), Nikhon Schuler (Eversource), Sheila McKay (CABE), Sherrilin Dinello (CASBO), Michael Morrisey

New members: Nakisha Strickland (CREC), Mason Thrall (CREC), Don Cusson (CEMA)

Other participants: Jean Cronin (COSTA), Walter Morton (CEMA), Randy Collins, Stephen Dodge, Johanna Zanvettor (Norwalk Public Schools), Megan Andrews, Sandi Casberg (DOE), Lidia Rupert (BETP), Chelsea Uphaus, Derek Whaley, Stephen Whaley

Propane School Buses

ROUSH CleanTech (ROUSH) provided a presentation on propane school buses and how ROUSH has been involved in their deployment. ROUSH also provided some comparisons between propane and diesel engine maintenance costs and fuel pricing.

The Propane Education & Research Council (PERC) presented an analysis of propane as an alternative fuel regarding the total cost of ownership (TCO) and other logistics of implementation.

The Transportation Logistical Administrator for Norwalk Public Schools (Norwalk) presented on transitioning to propane school buses from Norwalk's perspective.

Questions

Q: How did Norwalk handle driver and technician training?

A: Norwalk indicated their vendor, Hocon Gas, trained Norwalk staff on proper fueling procedures and safety.

Q: How is cabin heating handled on a propane bus, does heating occur from a heating core like on a diesel bus or is there a mechanism to heat to up separately?

A: Propane buses are heated in the same way as any other vehicle. The heat is generated by the engine's coolant.

Q: What are the costs of infrastructure needed to run and maintain propane buses.

A: PERC indicated that school districts have a couple of options with refueling infrastructure.

The most common option is working with a propane marketer to provide the infrastructure with a fueling contract. The marketer can do the site prep for the refueling infrastructure, to include a landing pad, crash protection, power and data to the location. The marketer may include that within the contract and there may be no out of pocket, or they will bill them for the site prep.

The other option is to purchase the refueling infrastructure and complete the site prep using their own finances. They still can work with a propane marketer to put it in, but they are not tied to a contract. Refueling infrastructure can range for $65k to over $300k if they were purchasing on their own. Prices can fluctuate because of the site prep may be needed.

ROUSH indicated that school districts are getting the infrastructure from their fuel marketers.

Q: How many propane buses are currently registered in CT?

A: As of July 2026, there are 641 propane buses in the state.

Q: Where can someone learn more about the carbon intensity comparisons of propane and other fuels. Is there a source for the maps or calculations used in the presentation?

A: Norwalk indicated their data came from EPA's website and EPA's emissions maps. DEEP noted that prior to issuing the final report, the workgroup will need to discuss common environmental metrics for all alternative fuels.

Q: Are there any safety concerns associated with the operation or maintenance of propane school buses?

A: Multiple presenters responded that technician and driver education is a high priority and many provide hands-on training to drivers and technicians when

propane buses are introduced to a school district. Some providers will also include local fire departments.