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GREENSTEIN-SMITH BILL TO TRAIN STUDENTS HOW TO CONVERT CARS TO ALTERNATIVE FUEL VEHICLES APPROVED BY SENATE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Committee Releases Four Bills Encouraging the Purchase, Conversion and Use of Alternative Fuel Vehicles

TRENTON – A measure sponsored by Senators Linda R. Greenstein and Bob Smith that would encourage colleges and vocational schools to train students how to convert gasoline- and diesel-powered vehicles to low- and zero-emission vehicles was approved today by the Senate Environment and Energy Committee.

“As gasoline prices remain high, the sales of alternative fuel cars are seeing a surge in the Garden State. Many New Jerseyans are starting to realize that electric, propane and compressed natural gas vehicles provide cleaner, cheaper alternatives to traditionally-powered vehicles,” said Senator Greenstein, D-Middlesex and Mercer, and Vice Chair of the Committee. “By encouraging our community colleges and vocational schools to teach students how to convert traditionally-powered vehicles to use alternative fuel, our students will be at the forefront on this technology and will be prepared to enter into a workforce where these skills will be valued and needed.”

The bill, S-2192, would establish a \$250,000 grant program for New Jersey community colleges and vocational schools to create training programs in order to educate students about the conversion of gasoline- and diesel-powered vehicles to low- and zero-emission vehicles such as electric, propane and compressed natural gas fueling systems. Grant-eligible training programs would also train students about the maintenance of these vehicles and systems. The program would be funded through revenue collected by the Board of Public Utilities through the societal benefits charge and administered by the New Jersey Department of Labor.

“Due to more stringent regulations on car emissions and increased purchasing incentives on zero-emission cars both nationally and here in New Jersey, more and more New Jerseyans will purchase alternative fuel cars and in the next few years and fueling infrastructure will become common-place. As this occurs, New Jersey will have a large and aging fleet of gasoline-powered vehicles on the road,” said Senator Smith, D-Middlesex and Somerset, and Chair of the Committee. “By getting ahead of the game now and teaching students how to convert traditional fuel vehicles into alternative fuel vehicles, we will be prepared for those car owners who wish to take advantage of the new alternative fuel technology, to save money on fuel and to reduce air pollution by converting their cars.”

The bill was approved by the Committee with a vote of 3-0-2. It now heads to the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee for further review.

The Senate Environment and Energy Committee approved three additional measures encouraging the purchase of alternative fuel vehicles in the Garden State. The bills are:

S-2196, sponsored by Senators Smith and Greenstein, which would direct the Commissioner of Community Affairs to adopt a compressed natural gas vehicle home-fueling connections code, establishing appropriate standards for compressed natural gas fueling systems installed in residential garages and homes.

S-2197, bipartisan legislation, sponsored by Senators Smith and Bateman, which would allow school buses powered by compressed natural gas to be used in New Jersey.

SR-76, sponsored by Senators Smith and Greenstein, which would encourage the federal government to conduct safety testing on compressed natural gas-run school buses with 3-2 seating configurations – the most commonly-used configuration on New Jersey school buses.

S-2197 heads to the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee for further review, while S-2196 and SR-76 head straight to the Senate floor.