

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Maintenance and Support Services for Lion Electric and Lightning eMotors Zero-Emission School Buses in California

Issuing Organization:	CALSTART
Issue Date:	04/27/2026
Response Deadline:	05/27/2026
Submit Responses To:	Schoolbusteam@calstart.org

I. BACKGROUND

CALSTART is a national clean transportation nonprofit. As part of this work, CALSTART is seeking input from qualified firms, service providers, and industry experts on the availability and cost of maintenance services for Lion Electric and Lightning eMotors zero-emission school buses currently operating in California school districts.

Since 2018, Lion Electric and Lightning eMotors zero-emission school buses have been deployed across California through a range of incentive programs, including air district, regional, utility, and federal programs such as the Environmental Protection Agency's Clean School Bus Program.

Following the exit of Lion Electric and Lightning eMotors from the U.S. market, many school districts are uncertain about how to maintain their buses going forward. CALSTART is conducting this market research to better understand the available maintenance options, associated costs, and how a program might be structured to help keep these school buses operating safely and reliably.

This request for information (RFI) is for information and planning purposes only. It is not a solicitation for proposals or a commitment to fund or procure services.

Responses may be used to inform the potential development of a future program or procurement.

II. HOW TO RESPOND

CALSTART invites responses from any organization with relevant experience or expertise, including:

- Zero-emission school bus repair and maintenance providers
- Bus manufacturers or authorized service centers
- Diagnostic tool and software vendors
- Service contract or extended warranty providers
- Technician training organizations
- Regional maintenance cooperatives or service networks
- California public school districts or fleet operators currently operating Lion Electric or Lightning eMotors zero-emission school buses in California

You do not need to respond to every section in your response. Focus on the areas most relevant to your work. In your response, indicate which section(s) you are addressing.

Submit responses as a PDF or Word document (no more than 15 pages, excluding attachments) to schoolbusteam@calstart.org by **May 27, 2026** at 5 p.m. Pacific Time. The subject of your email should be "RFI Response." The title of your document should be:

"[Your Organization Name] RFI Response Lion Electric and Lightning eMotors Zero-Emission School Bus Maintenance"

Clearly label any information in your response that is confidential or proprietary. CALSTART will handle marked information in accordance with applicable public records laws.

III. RESPONDENT EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

CALSTART will review all responses received. You do not need to meet all the criteria below to respond. CALSTART is particularly interested in organizations that:

- Have hands-on experience maintaining and repairing Lion Electric and/or Lightning eMotors zero-emission school buses;
- Can demonstrate the ability to serve school districts across multiple regions of California;
- Have clear, competitive pricing and the capacity to scale services;
- Have an understanding of incentive programs, including California state-funded incentive programs and federal programs;
- Can support technician training or workforce development efforts;
- Have experience working with public-school-district-owned zero-emission school buses; or
- Are a school district or fleet operator currently operating Lion Electric and/or Lightning eMotors zero-emission school buses and can share firsthand experience with maintenance needs, service gaps, and operational challenges.

IV. AREAS OF INTEREST

The following sections describe the specific topics for which CALSTART is seeking information. Provide specific examples or references wherever possible.

A. Service Experience and Capacity

CALSTART seeks to understand the current market capacity for maintaining and repairing Lion Electric and Lightning eMotors zero-emission school buses in California and the circumstances under which the most services are needed.

1. Briefly describe your experience servicing Lion Electric and/or Lightning eMotors zero-emission school buses, including the make(s), model(s), and model year(s) you have worked on.
2. Identify the areas of California where you currently provide, or could provide, maintenance and repair services for Lion Electric and/or Lightning eMotors zero-emission school buses.
3. How many trained technicians does your organization have available to service Lion Electric and/or Lightning eMotors zero-emission school buses? What would you need to expand that capacity?
4. What are the most common repairs you have performed on Lion Electric and/or Lightning eMotors zero-emission school buses, and how do these repairs affect whether the buses can remain in service?
5. Are there any parts or components that are currently hard to find or in short supply? Please describe the parts or components you have had difficulty replacing.
6. What is your average response time to make a service call once notified? What is your average time to complete repairs on a zero-emission school bus?

B. Routine and Preventive Maintenance

CALSTART is interested in identifying preventive maintenance opportunities to extend the operational life of Lion Electric and Lightning eMotors zero-emission school buses and reduce total life cycle costs.

1. What does a recommended routine maintenance schedule look like for Lion Electric and Lightning eMotors zero-emission school buses, and how does it change as the buses age or accumulate additional miles?
2. Which maintenance tasks have the greatest impact on keeping the buses operating reliably over the long term?
3. How would you recommend conducting an initial inspection of a fleet to identify which buses need attention first?

4. Do Lion Electric's and Lightning eMotor's built-in monitoring or reporting tools help with maintenance planning? If so, how are these tools used in practice?
5. Is there any additional information that would be helpful to share regarding the built-in monitoring systems?

C. Battery Replacement and Major Repairs

CALSTART seeks to better understand the scope and cost of battery maintenance and repair in Lion Electric and Lightning eMotors zero-emission school buses.

1. Do you anticipate Lion Electric or Lightning eMotors zero-emission school buses will require battery replacements within their' typical operational lifespan (approximately 12 years for most school districts)? If so, what is the typical cost range for battery replacement for each manufacturer? Break down costs by parts, labor, and disposal, where possible.
2. Have you identified any circumstances in which Lion Electric or Lightning eMotors zero-emission school buses would require battery replacement over battery repairs to remain operational?
3. What other significant repairs (beyond batteries) commonly arise as the Lion Electric/Lightning eMotors zero-emission buses age? Include approximate cost estimates where available.
4. Are there refurbishment or component rebuild options that could extend a bus's operational life at a lower cost than full replacement?
5. Are there any limitations that you have identified that would prevent proper repairs? If so, please explain.

D. Diagnostic Tools and Software

Lion Electric and Lightning eMotors zero-emission school buses may require proprietary diagnostic software and equipment to diagnose and repair issues. CALSTART seeks to understand the scope, accessibility, and cost of acquiring, operating, and maintaining these tools.

1. What diagnostic software and hardware tools are required to service Lion Electric and Lightning eMotors zero-emission school buses? What are the associated costs, and where can these tools be obtained?
2. Have you experienced any challenges licensing, accessing, or maintaining diagnostic software and hardware tools for Lion Electric and/or Lightning eMotors zero-emission school buses?
3. What challenges, if any, exist related to diagnostic or fault codes for Lion Electric and/or Lightning eMotors zero-emission school buses?
4. What training is required to effectively use Lion Electric's and Lightning eMotor's diagnostic tools? Is this training currently available, and, if so, in what format and at what cost?

E. Warranty and Service Contract Options

CALSTART seeks to understand options available to fleets to extend coverage or enter into service agreements for zero-emission school buses that are now out of warranty.

1. Does your organization offer any extended warranty or service contract coverage for Lion Electric and/or Lightning eMotors zero-emission school buses? If so, what does the coverage include, how long does it last, and what are the associated costs?
2. What components or types of repairs are typically covered or excluded under extended warranty or service contracts?
3. What volume discounts or pricing structures, if any, are available for extended warranties or service contracts?
4. Can extended coverage or service agreements be tailored to meet the needs of the fleet?

F. Technician Training

CALSTART seeks to understand the opportunities to expand technician training programs and increase the pool of qualified service providers across California.

1. Does your organization offer technician training for Lion Electric and/or Lightning eMotors zero-emission school buses? If so, describe the curriculum, training duration, service area, and whether any certifications are awarded.
2. Could your training program support a “train-the-trainer” model, in which trained technicians subsequently train others at their own organizations?
3. What is the estimated cost to fully train one technician to fully service a Lion Electric and/or Lightning eMotors zero-emission school bus?
4. Do you have existing relationships with community colleges, trade schools, or other workforce development programs that could support a broader training effort?

G. Infrastructure

1. If issues arise with vehicle charging, can you diagnose whether charging faults originate with a zero-emission school bus, the charging equipment, or communication between the two?
2. Are you able to support Lion Electric and/or Lightning eMotors zero-emission school buses that have compatibility issues with existing charging systems? What about new charging systems?
3. How do you coordinate with school districts or utilities when vehicle faults appear to be caused by electrical infrastructure or chargers?
4. Are there common charging issues observed with Lion Electric and/or Lightning eMotors zero-emission school buses?

H. Program and Funding Considerations

CALSTART is exploring how a maintenance support program might be structured. We welcome your perspective on approaches that would be practical and effective.

1. Which of the following approaches would your organization be best positioned to participate in? Describe your capacity for each.
 - Service contracts with designated maintenance providers

- Extended warranty programs
 - Technician training and certification programs
 - Regional service networks or maintenance cooperatives
 - Direct support to school districts for diagnostic tools and minor repairs
2. What is a realistic estimate of the annual cost per bus to cover both routine maintenance and major repairs under a service contract?
 3. Are there program models or structures not listed above that you think would work better or be more cost-effective for addressing maintenance needs at scale?

V. ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Include the following in your response:

- Organization name and type (manufacturer, nonprofit, school district, etc.)
- Current service area (counties or regions of California you serve)
- Approximate number of Lion Electric and/or Lightning eMotors zero-emission school buses you have serviced or currently have under service agreements
- Any relevant certifications, manufacturer authorizations, or licenses
- School districts or public agencies for whom you have provided zero-emission school bus maintenance services.

VI. TIMELINE

The deadline to submit proposals is May 27, 2026 at 5 p.m. PT.

VII. CONTACT

Submit your response and direct any questions to:

CALSTART Electric School Bus Team
schoolbusteam@calstart.org
CALSTART

VIII. CONFIDENTIALITY

Note that information you provide in response to this RFI will be shared with our funding partners and may be subject to public records laws that could make it publicly available. If you wish to keep any portion of your submission confidential, clearly mark the top of the relevant page(s) in bold with “CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION” and CALSTART will not share those pages with the public agencies unless mutually agreed.

IX. DISCLAIMER

This RFI is issued for information and market research purposes only. It does not represent a commitment by CALSTART to issue a solicitation, enter into a contract, or fund any services. CALSTART is not obligated to respond to questions submitted outside of the formal process described above.

Responses to this RFI may be shared with partner organizations involved in planning for Lion Electric and/or Lightning eMotors zero-emission school bus maintenance support in California. Information marked as confidential will be handled accordingly.

Submission of a response does not give any organization preferential standing in any future procurement process. No reimbursement will be provided for preparing or submitting a response to this RFI.

— End of RFI —