

QuickPoint! – TriMet’s Electric Bus Plans Could Burst into Flames

By Mia Tiwana

Connecticut’s bus service just pulled its entire fleet of electric buses after [one bus burst into uncontrollable flames](#). While the small risk of an electric bus fire is scary, Portland’s TriMet could face huge financial fires if it continues growing its electric fleet.

The upfront costs to go electric are high, and TriMet has no plans to cover these costs. Until this year, TriMet received one-time federal grants and funds to purchase electric buses. Now, the agency doesn’t know how it will sustain future spending. TriMet can purchase each bus for about \$1 million, or almost double the price of a diesel bus.

TriMet operated its first five electric buses on Line 62 and [stated](#) that the buses “required a lot of maintenance and experienced a lot of down-time.” TriMet admits there are unanswered questions about how far buses can last without a charge, where on-route chargers will be, and when costly batteries will need replacing.

TriMet’s job is to move passengers, not to invest in brand-new technology with money it doesn’t have. Without proper funding, planning, or a guarantee that the investment will pay off, the right thing for TriMet to do is to pull the plug on its electric bus plans.

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