



Denali Citizens Council

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September 16, 2024

Dear Superintendent Merrell,

Our attention was caught recently by the announcement at Zion National Park that NPS has converted the park's entire shuttle fleet to electric buses. (<https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1207/zion-national-park-shuttles-are-now-electric.htm>).

We believe that with climate change wreaking havoc on Denali's ecosystems and infrastructure, the National Park Service should make an equally bold move here. Transportation is undoubtedly the largest contributor of greenhouse gas emissions associated with visiting Denali, and converting to buses that do not burn fossil fuels would both reduce carbon emissions and provide a jumping off point to educate visitors about climate change and practical responses. Electric buses would serve as a powerful symbol of NPS's commitment to protecting park resources. The switch to electric vehicles also will reduce harmful air pollution generated by conventional buses, and likely result in lower maintenance costs and both lower and more predictable fuel costs over time.

We recognize that there are additional challenges at Denali compared to Zion: e.g. the concessionaire owns the buses rather than NPS, the park road trips are much longer and cover more arduous terrain. However, we believe the technology exists to make a conversion to electric buses feasible, although we certainly support adequate vetting of any new equipment. It is important that any change not increase the number of buses on the road.

In particular, the Riley Creek Loop, Savage River Shuttle, Dog Sled Demo, and Denali Natural History Tour buses should provide a great testing ground for electric buses. Those routes are shorter, on better roads, and navigate less challenging terrain than the longer trips to Eielson or Wonder Lake (or, temporarily, East Fork).

We would be happy to assist in further research regarding electric buses for Denali, or to help Denali find its way to a zero-emission transportation system in whatever way that we can.

Sincerely,

DCC Board of Directors:
Scott Richardson
Nancy Russell
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