Explanation:
New York State’s Climate Law – The Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act – requires that the state reduce its greenhouse gas emissions 85%, below 1990 emission levels, by 2050. The transportation sector is both one of the most polluting sectors and “low hanging fruit,” ripe for decarbonization, as the technology exists today to electrify the sector’s low-, medium-, and heavy-duty vehicles. This legislation provides targeted tactics to help the state achieve its climate goals.

This bill requires that starting 2029, when purchasing new buses, public transportation systems must purchase zero-emission buses and related equipment. The bill requires that the Department of Transportation consider this requirement when formulating and dispersing its capital plans. Notably, the bill also provides labor protections to existing transit employees with collective bargaining agreements.

The Climate Action Council’s draft Scoping Plan includes the concept of this bill that the state should work with municipally-sponsored public transportation systems on a plan to transition to all-electric/zero-emission public transportation vehicles at defined replacement schedules appropriate for the transit provider.

This legislation complements other commitments and investments in electrifying transportation. For example, the MTA has already committed to purchase only electric buses after 2029 and to fully electrify its fleet by 2040. The state has committed more than $100 million toward the electrification of 25% of the five largest fleets, outside the MTA, by 2025 and 100% by 2035.

Summary:
This legislation amends the transportation law, in relation to the purchase of zero-emission buses and amends the public authorities law and the general municipal law, to require transit authorities to purchase electric-powered buses and other related equipment, as part of the regular replacement of each system's fleet, starting 2029. The bill provides labor protections to existing transit employees with collective bargaining agreements.