



SIERRA CLUB

MAINE CHAPTER

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To: Energy, Utilities, and Technology Committee

From: Patricia Rubert-Nason, Sierra Club Maine

Date: 03/07/2023

Re: **Testimony in Support of LD 524: An Act Requiring the Installation of Electric Vehicle Charging Stations in New Commercial and Multifamily Parking Lot Construction**

Senator Mark Lawrence, Representative S. Paige Ziegler, and members of the Energy, Utilities, and Technology Committee, I am testifying on behalf of Sierra Club Maine, representing over 22,000 supporters and members statewide. Founded in 1892, Sierra Club is one of our nation's oldest and largest environmental organizations. We work diligently to amplify the power of our 3.8 million members and supporters nation-wide as we work towards combating climate change and promoting a just and sustainable economy. To that end, we urge amending LD 524: An Act Requiring the Installation of Electric Vehicle Charging Stations in New Commercial and Multifamily Parking Lot Construction to incorporate the requirement that new construction be made EV-ready into the Maine Building Code.

While, as a concept draft, this still needs to be fleshed out, requiring that new construction, especially new multi-unit construction, be made EV-Ready supports our climate goals and is beneficial to Maine residents. According to multiple studies^{1,2} making buildings, especially multi-unit buildings, EV-ready (by running appropriate circuits at the time of construction) is significantly less expensive (by a factor of 3-5x) than retrofitting them later as a standalone project. When builders fail to run these circuits during construction, they impose significant excess costs on the eventual occupants of the buildings.

With the majority of Maine's emissions coming from the transportation sector, the adoption of electric vehicles is a key component of meeting our climate goals and the availability of charging is a key barrier. EV-charging is particularly challenging for the 21% of Mainers who live in multi-unit buildings, and retrofitting chargers after

¹ <https://caletc.com/assets/files/CALGreen-2019-Supplement-Cost-Analysis-Final-1.pdf>

²

<https://cleanairpartnership.org/cac/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/2-21-050-GTHA-EV-Ready-Costing-Study-2021.10.14.pdf>

construction in multi-unit buildings is also particularly challenging. Consequently, the Maine Transportation Roadmap³ identified increasing the availability of charging in multi-unit buildings as a key strategy to “unlock latent EV demand.”

Even if we set aside our commitments to reducing emissions, EV adoption is accelerating and homebuilders are starting to take notice. According to the National Association of Home Builders⁴

“Several auto manufacturers have announced they are phasing out combustion engine vehicles between 2025 and 2040, and as of 2018, EVs were projected to constitute 20% of annual vehicle sales by 2030. An increasing percentage of Americans will probably or definitely own an electric vehicle within the next five to 10 years, with 52% of respondents to recent surveys indicating such in 2021 compared to 15% in 2018.”

And the cost of installing the wiring at the time of construction of minimal; “Ted Clifton, president of Zero-Energy Plans, LLC, based in Coupeville, Wash., has found if the main electrical panel is located in the garage, his costs for additional wiring is about \$300.” New construction lasts for decades. If we fail to install the wiring at the time of construction, we impose much higher costs on future residents who are likely to own electric vehicles.

In recognition of these trends, in 2020, the International Code Council adopted a new provision to make all new homes built in the United States “EV-ready.”⁵ And in 2021 they issued Building Code Amendments for Electric Vehicle charging.⁶ I believe that Maine should incorporate these amendments into our building code. I would urge the committee to adopt an appropriate amendment to the bill and vote “Ought to Pass.”

Sincerely,
Patricia Rubert-Nason
Sierra Club Maine

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<https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov.future/files/inline-files/Maine%20Clean%20Transportation%20Roadmap.pdf>

⁴

<https://www.nahb.org/blog/2021/04/pre-wiring-for-electric-vehicle-charging-prepping-your-homes-for-future-demand/>

⁵ <https://qz.com/1781774/new-us-building-codes-require-plugs-for-electric-cars>

⁶ <https://codes.iccsafe.org/content/ICCEVBCSGGR2021P1/building-code-amendments-for-electric-vehicle-charging>