



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Testimony of Representative Benjamin Hymes presenting
LD 1659, "An Act to Raise Revenue to Fund Firefighting Equipment Purchases and Training Related to Electric Vehicle Fires Through a Fee on Electric Vehicles"
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation

April 30, 2025

Good afternoon, Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and distinguished members of the Transportation Committee. I am Representative Benjamin Hymes, proudly serving House District 38, and I'm here to present LD 1659.

As electric and hybrid vehicles become more common on Maine's roads, we are facing a growing danger: EV fires are extremely intense, toxic, and difficult to extinguish. Yet our fire departments are not equipped or trained to safely manage these emergencies. We've introduced a new fire hazard without providing the tools to combat it.

LD 1659 addresses this critical gap. It proposes a \$250 fee on the sale of any new, or used, electric and hybrid vehicles in Maine. That revenue would be directed to a dedicated fund, supporting fire departments statewide in purchasing specialized equipment and, potentially, training through the Maine Fire Service Institute.

To give perspective: In 2024, over 7,300 electric vehicles were registered in Maine—yet not a dollar of those sales went toward mitigating the unique fire risk they bring. Based on those numbers, this bill would have generated \$1.84 million to support our first responders.

The need is real. Just one fire blanket for EV containment costs over \$1,500—well beyond what most departments can absorb. That doesn't include hazmat cleanup or vehicle disposal.

I am open to discussing both the fee amount and how end-of-year balances could support training initiatives. This is a targeted, commonsense response to a real and growing safety issue.

Thank you for your time. I would be happy to answer any questions.

Benjamin C. Hymes
State Representative