

Nathan Proctor
Arlington
LD 1394

Hello and thank you Chairs Gere and Curry, and members of the Committee,

I am the Senior National Campaign Director on U.S. PIRG Right to Repair campaign. I've worked on this issue in a number of contexts. U.S. PIRG is a national, nonpartisan grassroots organization which advocates for consumers. We have members all across the country, including many in Maine.

I am here to support the efforts of the working group and to specifically oppose exempting electric vehicles from the requirements.

I believe that people should be allowed to fix the products that they own on their own terms. Increasingly, in just about every kind of device there is, manufacturers restrict repairs outside of their control, or design the technology to steer repair work to their associated service entities. In many cases, the costs they charge in these "authorized" settings is not competitive in an open market, so they use a variety of methods to control repairs.

Car repair costs are going through the roof, many times the rate of inflation. That's just a fact. The best way to contain those costs is to have robust competition, with different businesses working to innovate service to deliver at a lower price point. Those businesses have united behind the idea that a car's repair and maintenance data could help them. I believe that if it's your car, it's your data. That's why I think Maine's voters got it right. We should be allowed to take the data in our cars and provide it to the mechanic of our choice to see if we can get the costs of car repair under control.

You obviously need to get the system right, which is why the working group's efforts are important, but they must be allowed to complete that project. Additionally, the idea that you would have the right to repair your car unless you buy an electric vehicle is capricious. If we want to allow people to choose electric cars, they need to have infrastructure to support those cars, and repair choice is a key part of that.

I hope the committee will reject attempts to stop progress on car repair choice in Maine, side with the vast majority of voters, and allow the working group to continue.