



Maryland Chapter

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Committee: Judicial Proceedings
Testimony on: SB 144 “Electric Vehicle Recharging Equipment for Multifamily Units Act”
Position: Support
Hearing Date: February 26, 2021

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club strongly supports SB 144, which would support installation of electric vehicle (EV) charging equipment in multi-family dwellings.

The bill specifies that the bylaws or rules of condominiums and homeowners associations (HOAs) may not prohibit or unreasonably restrict the installation or use of EV recharging equipment in a unit owner’s deeded parking space or exclusively assigned parking space. If approval to install EV recharging equipment is required, the governing body would need to process the application in the same manner as an application for approval of an architectural modification to the condo or to a dwelling.

Unit owners seeking to install EV recharging equipment must agree in writing to: comply with applicable architectural standards; obtain any needed permits; engage a licensed electrician to install the equipment; cover the costs to install, maintain, repair, and/or remove the equipment; pay for the electricity usage associated with the separately metered EV recharging equipment; and provide a certificate of insurance naming the condominium association or HOA as an additional insured, or reimburse the association or HOA for the cost of an increased insurance premium attributable to the EV recharging equipment.

The bill also would establish the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Modernization Grant Program in the Maryland Energy Administration to provide grants, if sought by the governing body of a condominium or HOA, to facilitate the electrical upgrade of a parking structure (owned by the condo or HOA) to support EV recharging equipment. The funding for the new grant program would come from the Maryland Strategic Energy Investment Fund.

More than 345,000 electric cars were sold in the U.S. in 2020, and 2.3 million were sold worldwide. More and more consumers recognize the growing value and quality of plug-in vehicles. Automakers have many more EV models on the way. The greatest limitation on continued growth of EVs is availability of charging infrastructure.

Encouraging the growth of EVs is critically important because transportation is now the largest contributor to climate-damaging greenhouse gas emissions in this country. Tailpipe emissions from gasoline and diesel-powered vehicles also are hazardous to human health and are linked to various cancers, heart disease, asthma, emphysema, and other respiratory diseases. As more coal plants are retired, and more clean renewable sources of power are brought online, the emissions from utilities providing electricity to charge electric vehicles will continue to decline.

In summary, this bill is a common-sense approach to standardizing reasonable responsibilities regarding installation of electric vehicle charging equipment in multi-family dwellings. The bill’s passage would encourage more EV usage in our state, which would reduce greenhouse gas and other health-damaging tailpipe emissions and improve our environment. We urge the committee to issue a favorable report on this legislation.

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Founded in 1892, the Sierra Club is America’s oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization. The Maryland Chapter has over 70,000 members and supporters, and the Sierra Club nationwide has approximately 800,000 members.