



Maryland Chapter

7338 Baltimore Avenue, Suite 102
College Park, MD 20740-3211

Committee: Judicial Proceedings
Testimony on: SB734 - “Electric Vehicle Recharging Equipment for Multifamily Units Act”
Position: Favorable with Amendment
Hearing Date: February 25, 2020

The Maryland Sierra Club urges a “favorable with amendment” report on SB734, which would support installation of electric vehicle (EV) charging equipment in multi-family dwellings. The proposed amendment (identified at the bottom of this testimony) would clarify one specific aspect of the bill, and would not change the bill’s focus, objective, or constituent parts.

The bill specifies that the bylaws or rules of condominiums and homeowners associations (HOA) 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 unit or dwelling. To avoid unreasonable delay in processing an application for approval to install or use EV recharging equipment, an application not denied in writing within 60 days after being received would be deemed approved.

In addition, unit owners seeking to install EV recharging equipment would be required to 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 further 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.

Approximately 330,000 electric vehicles were sold in the U.S. last year, and almost two 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. However, a significant limitation on continued growth of EVs is the availability of charging infrastructure.

Encouraging the growth of EVs is critically important because transportation is now the largest contributor to 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.

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.

Our requested amendment would add that condominiums and HOAs which do not currently allow reserved parking spaces would be required to designate parking spaces for individuals who want to install electric vehicle recharging equipment, and who agree to comply with all the relevant provisions the bill would impose on unit owners at condos and HOAs where individuals have designated parking spaces.

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 emissions and improve our environment. We urge the committee to issue a favorable report with amendment on this legislation.

Brian Ditzler
Transportation Chair
Brian.Ditzler@MDSierra.org

Josh Tulkin
Chapter Director
Josh.Tulkin@MDSierra.org