

House Bill 835--Retail Service Stations – New Construction – Setbacks and Electric Charging Stations

Sponsor: Ruth, et al.

Position: **Oppose**

PennTex Ventures, LLC, is a commercial real estate development firm based out of Pittsburgh, PA. To date, the firm has invested more than \$50,000,000 in the State of Maryland on projects ranging from grocery stores to high end restaurants, to discount retailers, to doctor's offices, and retail service stations. Our current pipeline of projects (those with executed leases and moving through entitlements) total approximately \$75,000,000 in additional investments in the State of Maryland we're committed to make over the next 24 months. We're also partnering with other developers and landowners in Maryland on projects totaling another \$20,000,000 in investments in the State. The projects we have completed have created innumerable construction-related and permanent jobs for Marylanders. We enjoy doing business with communities across the State of Maryland and continue to seek new development opportunities.

HB 835, if approved as written, would eliminate all retail service store development in our pipeline; more than \$50,000,000 of investment in Maryland's economy over the next 24 months.

HB 835 consists generally of two (2) parts:

Part 1 – Establishment of a requirement that new facilities provide electric vehicle (EV) stations at a rate of one EV station per pump location.

And

Part 2 – Establishment of 1,000-foot setbacks from new retail service stations to certain existing land uses as enumerated in the Bill.

Regarding Part 1, the EV station mandate:

PennTex Ventures is a preferred developer for the largest retail service station operator in the world and is supportive of the rollout of EV charging across the United States. In fact, our tenant has required that going forward we must make every site we develop "EV-Ready". "EV-Ready" means that when we construct a new development, we are installing the power

infrastructure required to create EV charging stalls in our site design. The amount and number of charging stalls in our new developments will grow alongside EV adoption with the infrastructure in place.

Further, HB 835 as written would significantly increase the amount of impervious surface area required for new retail service station development. The bill would result in the addition of approximately 15 parking spaces, or an increase of 40-50% in impervious surface for a given development. At present there is variability in the demand for EV charging based on geographic location. There is a greater need for EV charging in urban areas and high traffic corridors when compared with more rural locations. The mandate of a one-size-fits-all requirement for the number of chargers would add impervious surface to new development in a manner that doesn't reflect actual customer utilization.

Regarding Part 2, the 1,000-foot setbacks:

The enactment of the 1,000' setback requirement from other service stations, schools, and residential uses effectively precludes retail service station development on any parcel of land in the State of Maryland. This would primarily serve to entrench existing less safe and outdated gasoline fueling stations. It would not promote the development of new EV charging stalls which would accompany new retail service station development as the bill intends.

For the reasons stated above, we respectfully ask the committee for an unfavorable report on HB 835.

For questions or assistance please contact: Robert Glidewell, rglidewell@gsproctor.com, 561-239-1340 or Sherrie Sims, ssims@gsproctor.com, 410-733-7171