



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

BILL: House Bill 507 – Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Environmental Justice Considerations

SPONSOR: Delegate Proctor

HEARING DATE: February 16, 2022

COMMITTEE: Environment and Transportation

CONTACT: Intergovernmental Affairs Office, 301-780-8411

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS House Bill 507, Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Environmental Justice Considerations**, that will require the use of environmental justice guidelines when selecting communities for the development of electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure.

Residents of equity areas face higher levels of pollution from transportation than residents in affluent areas. In addition, low and moderate-income households spend a greater share of their income on fuel than affluent households. With lower “fueling” costs and maintenance savings, electric vehicles are much more affordable to own, but the lack of charging infrastructure in equity areas is one significant barrier to adoption.

Prince George's County recently released a Climate Action Plan, that focuses on Health and Equity as two of its major pillars in efforts to reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions and develop community resilience to adapt to a changing planet. This Bill directly supports Climate Action Plan Priority Recommendations M-4 and M-5 to accelerate deployment of EVs and charging infrastructure with a focus on areas that have faced significant environmental injustices.

Prince George's County is among nation's wealthiest majority African American communities, and yet has the lowest average income in the DC metro area and has both urban and rural census tracts with environmental justice equity challenges. The County's residents have long experienced the negative externalities of fossil fuel burning power plants, while reaping none of the economic value. Areas surrounding the beltway have been affected by emissions from vehicular traffic and environmental

injustices that increase their exposure to pollutants and lower their access to healthy food, trees and open space, resulting in higher asthma rates, increased heart disease and lower infant birth-weights. The census tracts with the worst environmental problems are also often those with the lowest income populations- meaning that the transition to electrification will be the most difficult. In addition, persons in these areas often live-in multifamily housing, or other homes without private parking, making accessing home charging a challenge. The rural areas of the County are less developed, and their distance from major metropolitan canters and areas with retail and healthy food makes access to local charging an absolute necessity for EV adoption.

The risk of making EV decisions without EJ considerations is the creation of charging deserts- areas where residents choosing to replace their vehicle do not choose an EV because they cannot dependably charge their vehicle, and also where non-resident EV drivers choose not to go, and services and investment are reduced because of a lack of infrastructure. This represents a significant impediment to making a stronger transition to clean energy and will only widen the gaps between the wealthy and those of moderate and low incomes.

Equity begins with removing any preconceived notions that low-income or BIPOC communities are not interested in sustainability. Research has repeatedly shown that people of color in the U.S., including Hispanics/Latinos, African Americans, and other non-White racial/ethnic groups, are more concerned and more interested in activism regarding to achieve action on climate change. Further, Black and Hispanic Americans who reside in these equity areas are the most likely to be aware of and interested in Climate Action because of the direct experience of environmental injustice. People at the most risk must be part of the conversation and help shape the right solutions for their communities.

For the reasons stated above, the Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS HB 507** and asks for a **FAVORABLE** report.