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Testimony

Retail Service Stations – Electric Vehicle Charging Stations and Property Tax Credit for Service Station Conversions

March 7th, 2023

Honorable Chair Wilson, and Distinguished Members of the Economic Matters Committee,

I am writing in support of HB 0889 sponsored by Delegate Ruth. The bill would require retail service stations built after October 1st, 2023 to install fast charging EV stations and would allow jurisdictions across the state to provide a property tax credit with 50% state matching funds for converting old gas stations to new uses. This bill increases a green footprint by provide more access to charging stations and provides more tools for revitalization in commercial areas. These provisions are important for communities, businesses, and the environment as we move forward towards a sustainable future.

Requiring fast charging EV stations at new retail service locations assists those with electric vehicles today and those in the future. This would improve access to charging stations across the state, adding convenience and making electric vehicles more accessible to residents. More electric vehicles hit the road every year, increasing the demand for charging stations. Although it will be many years before gas powered cars are gone, at some point, the number of gasoline powered cars will have dropped enough that the market for gas will be insufficient to support the number of gas stations currently being built. We have to ensure that these businesses are prepared for the consumer changes and can be part of a clean energy economy.

The property tax credit would be a vital tool used in converting gas stations to other uses. As more electric cars take to the streets, gas stations will generate less revenue and could see some stations go out of business. We have to ensure that there are alternatives in place to avoid the blight of vacant gas stations and the corresponding job loss throughout our communities. The tax credit would alleviate some of the expense in renovating the gas stations, such as the high cost of removing the underground storage tanks, and would help revitalization efforts in commercial areas. The new use of the converted gas station would benefit the surrounding community as it would keep the jobs, revenue, and beauty in the area. The 50% state matching will also prompt jurisdictions to find these opportunities where possible and be proactive in identifying new ways to use the space.

I urge the members to give a favorable report on HB 0889 and continue to find solutions to promote a more eco-friendly future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Izzy Patoka", written in a cursive style.

Councilman Izzy Patoka