

Senator Brian Feldman
Chair, Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee
2 West Miller Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Mr. Chairman,

I am writing in support of HB 834, the Electric Vehicle Charging Reliability Act.

As an EV driver in Maryland, I have dealt with many issues while charging or attempting to charge my vehicle. In most cases these issues are a result of a lack of or no maintenance altogether on charging units.

The issues I have faced as an EV driver have been at charging sites operated by both Private Charge Point Operators and the various Utility companies of Maryland. In my hometown of Westminster, MD there is one fast charger and it was offline for four months. There are a growing number of EVs in Westminster and none of these owners can efficiently charge their vehicles in public due to this charger being down. While there are Level 2 chargers available, the sites are out of the way of most EV drivers' daily commitments and stops. Additionally, Level 2 charges take much longer to charge EVs, making them not worth most EV drivers time to use.

What is most concerning about the Westminster EV Smart site is that it was down for four months, and the reported uptime does not reflect the actual uptime of the site. Thusly, BGE EV Smart has not been held accountable for their inability to manage this charging site.

While I typically charge at home, I do use the public sites when I need to charge fast or in emergency situations. Most recently, my garage door suffered a broken torsion spring. My family is a two EV and an EV only household. Due to this issue, we were unable to charge our vehicles at home and had no options to fall back on as it was too late at night to resolve this issue. This event caused a lot stress on my family and could have been mitigated if the Westminster EV Smart site was active and working.

Additionally, there was a recent scenario, prior to the charger finally being put back online, where a Pennsylvania driver needed to use the charger to get home and was unable to use it. Fortunately, they could plug in to the level 2 chargers that are also located at the site, but their trip home was derailed by 2-3 hours. This situation could have been avoided if there were enforceable uptime requirements.

During the four months I have contacted BGE, EV Smart, and Shell Recharge via PlugShare, Email, Phone, and even Twitter. I received response that they were actively working on resolving the issue. It wasn't until a few weeks ago that they finally took the old unit out of the ground and began to replace it. All the while, EV drivers in Westminster still had no reliable place to charge their vehicles quickly.

Without accountability, EV drivers will continue to be marginalized in the State of Maryland. While I can only speak regarding my issues with BGE operated charging stations, it is clear that

they are not taking EV charging infrastructure seriously. I watched a previous meeting where BGE spoke and referenced BTC units in storage waiting for deployment. Why did it take three months for any resolution to begin with the only charger in my town if they had units they could have deployed? Charging sites need to be able to be repaired or replaced in a timely manner to prevent inconveniencing EV drivers. The amount of time this charger has been offline is unacceptable. As a citizen of Maryland, I do not want my tax dollars going to companies that are incapable of the upkeep of charging infrastructure. If this program is to be extended there needs to be stricter guidelines that hold the utilities accountable for the equipment they put in the ground. That is exactly what HB 834 does, holds utilities accountable for charging stations that families, like mine, rely upon.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and I urge the committee to support HB 834 and stand up for EV drivers throughout Maryland.

Respectfully,

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