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Position: Favorable with Amendment

House Bill 405
House Economic Matters Committee

Supporting documents attached: HOA cease-and-desist letter and photographs of safety measures.

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak. My name is Darrell Wallace. I am a lifelong Maryland resident and a tenant who, with the homeowner's permission, installed a safe outdoor receptacle on the owner's unit to charge my electric vehicle using a Tesla mobile charger and a specialized extension cord.

To minimize and mitigate any potential risk, I have taken several safety precautions. When the charger is in use, the cable that crosses the sidewalk is protected with a cable cover. The electrical connection points are enclosed in a bright orange protective cover with electrical hazard warnings on all sides. In addition, I only charge overnight, when pedestrian traffic is minimal. Photographs of these safety measures have been provided for your review.

Shortly after the installation, the condominium association's attorney issued a formal **Demand for Cessation of Covenant Violation**, stating for various reasons that the equipment creates a hazardous condition that must be promptly removed. The association's position is that I cannot use the common areas, specifically the sidewalk and front yard, for my exclusive use and the setup creates a potential tripping hazard. I exercised my right to appeal this decision and participated in a formal hearing before the association.

During that hearing, it was explained that the installation itself was on the unit, which was also recognized by the board to be the owner's property, and the setup was temporary and safety-controlled. Furthermore, an argument was made that residents are routinely permitted to use these same common areas for temporary activities such as watering gardens and washing cars with a water hose, or running extension cords for seasonal decorations or other short-term uses. It was mentioned that these activities present the same potential trip hazard, yet no similar restrictions are applied.

Despite this, the association upheld its decision, ignoring the clear bias, and declined to engage in any type of short-term compromise. The association acknowledged Maryland's Right-to-Charge framework and agreed to explore assigning designated parking spaces. However, this would require amending the master deed with approval from two-thirds of homeowners, an uncertain and lengthy process. Even if approved, the association stated that installation of a permanent charger would then require a licensed contractor and significant concrete work.

My current setup is temporary, practical, and appropriate for my situation. I am a renter and do not plan to remain long-term, so a permanent charging station is unnecessary. I also do not charge daily and avoid charging during times when pedestrian traffic and any potential risk would be highest.

Situations like mine are common for renters, short-term residents, and homeowners without the ability to install permanent infrastructure, and without clear protections, many Maryland residents will face the same barriers to adopting electric vehicles.

My question is this: **Would HB 405 cover temporary charging setups like mine?**

If not, I respectfully ask that the bill clarify that temporary, non-permanent charging methods, such as portable chargers and extension cords used with reasonable safety measures, are included within the protections of the law.

This bill is about access. For renters and short-term residents, temporary charging isn't a convenience, it's often the only practical way to safely own and operate an electric vehicle.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

Darrell D. Wallace