



January 25, 2022
House Committee on Corporations
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02908

Re: House Bill 7112 – AN ACT RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES - PARKING FACILITIES AND PRIVILEGES

Dear Chairman Solomon and members of the committee:

I'm writing to testify in support of House Bill 7112 on behalf of Green Energy Consumers Alliance, a non-profit organization based in Providence. Our mission is to harness the power of consumers to speed the transition to a low-carbon future. Our Drive Green program has helped hundreds of consumers make the transition to an electric vehicle (EV).

H7112 will help meet the Act On Climate mandate.

Transportation is the largest source of greenhouse gases in Rhode Island. There is no way to meet the Act On Climate mandate without replacing gas-powered cars with EVs. The transition to electric transportation is not only critical to reduce climate-warming emissions; it is inevitable considering where the market is headed. California, the country's largest new car market, announced in 2020 that they would no longer allow the sale of gas-powered cars after 2035, and our neighbors in Massachusetts have made a commitment to follow California's lead. General Motors will no longer sell vehicles with an internal combustion engine by 2035. Other automakers, like Ford, Volkswagen, and Volvo, are releasing dozens of electric vehicle models throughout this decade, including electric pick-up trucks and SUVs. According to Consumer Reports, 67% of consumers are considering an electric vehicle for their next car.¹ The benefits of this transition are numerous; electric vehicles are cheaper to operate, which will decrease transportation costs for working families; they're better for the climate and local air quality; and their fuel, electricity, is sourced locally, keeping dollars here in Rhode Island's economy.

Although EVs are coming, adoption will not happen fast enough to achieve the emissions-reduction mandate without building out charging infrastructure. 47% of consumers say that lack of public charging is holding them back from going electric.² As more Rhode Islanders consider EVs, especially condo- and apartment-dwellers who cannot charge in a private garage, there will need to be a buildout of public charging infrastructure to support them. Investment in parking

¹ <https://advocacy.consumerreports.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/CR-National-EV-Survey-December-2020-2.pdf>

² Ibid.



areas with long dwell times, such as the multi-household residential buildings and commercial lots mentioned in H7113, will be critical to enable Rhode Islanders to transition to EVs.

H7112 makes financial sense.

A key provision of this bill is that it targets new construction. Requiring a minimum number of “EV ready” or “EV capable” spots for new construction is cost-effective because it reduces the need for expensive retrofits to install EV charging in existing lots. A case study from the City of San Francisco found that making a parking space EV-ready at the time of construction is nearly four times cheaper than retrofits to install charging later, due to savings in construction management, permitting, inspection, and wiring.³ This bill will expand EV charging availability at least cost to both consumers and lot owners.

Programs like Electrify RI⁴, run by the Office of Energy Resources and National Grid’s Make Ready⁵ initiative have invested millions to help property owners install charging at existing sites. By focusing EV charging buildout in new builds, where costs are lower, H7113 can help minimize the overall cost of the transition to electric vehicles and empower more Rhode Islanders to switch to electric vehicles. \$23 million in federal ARPA funding has been allocated to Rhode Island to support the buildout of charging infrastructure; this bill may encourage more efficient allocation of federal funds to support more charging ports per dollar of investment.

H7112 aligns with what other states and cities are doing.

Hawaii, Oregon, Washington State, and California require a minimum number of EV capable charging spaces for commercial and multi-unit residential parking spaces. The graduated requirements listed in H7112 translate to 4-10% of parking spaces being EV-ready or EV-capable, which aligns with EV-supportive polices across the nation.⁶

I encourage the Committee to support this bill to prepare Rhode Island for the future of electric transportation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Mal Skowron'.

Mal Skowron
Transportation Policy & Program Coordinator

³ <https://www.swenergy.org/cracking-the-code-on-ev-ready-building-codes>

⁴ <http://www.energy.ri.gov/electrifyri.php>

⁵ <https://www.nationalgridus.com/RI-Business/Energy-Saving-Programs/Electric-Vehicle-Charging-Station-Program>

⁶ <https://www.swenergy.org/cracking-the-code-on-ev-ready-building-codes>