



April 24, 2025

Andrew S. Johnston
Executive Secretary
Public Service Commission of Maryland
6 St. Paul Street, 16th floor
Baltimore, MD 21202

Subject: Case No. 9478, In the Matter of the Petition of the Electric Vehicle Work Group for Implementation of a Statewide Electric Vehicle Portfolio

Re: Post-Hearing Comments

Dear Mr. Johnston:

The Alliance for Transportation Electrification (“ATE”)¹ hereby submits the following post-hearing comments pursuant to the Commission’s notice dated April 10, 2025, in the above-captioned docket.

Bill Impact. Several questions arose at the hearing about the bill impact of proposed Phase II programs. As with any program there is a bill impact, however in this case it is small, and the Benefit-Cost Analysis is positive. Moreover, the proposed programs should be judged together with the recognized non-economic benefits (which are difficult to quantify) that are consistent with the public policy goals of Maryland, namely the reduction in greenhouse gases (GHG) and improved public health outcomes from lower tailpipe emissions. In other words, widespread transportation electrification is a critical tool to achieve such goals with utilities acting as critical enablers for this transition in developing balanced programs with ratepayer funding.

In the record evidence in their petitions and at the recent hearing, the utilities explained how they will manage costs, that costs may in fact be lower based on actual levels of participation, and that only costs incurred will be entered into the regulatory asset for cost

¹ ATE is a 501(c)(6) non-profit corporation that engages with regulators and policymakers at the State and local government levels to remove barriers to EV adoption and to encourage the acceleration of electric vehicles (EV) infrastructure deployment. We consist of over 50 industry members along with affiliated non-governmental organizations across multiple sectors members that include electric utilities, auto and bus manufacturers, EV charging infrastructure providers, and related organizations.

recovery. Our conclusion is that the programs are well crafted to achieve the desired goals, and that the estimated costs reasonable. Therefore we recommend that they be approved.

Immediacy of Phase II Program Impact. Several questions at the hearing focused on Phase II’s impact on reducing existing distribution grid constraints, and how the proposed programs will avoid the need to build more traditional transmission and distribution infrastructure. Our understanding of Phase II is that it is intended to enable the utilities to test and identify several potential solutions to future grid congestion, and that these may be expanded, modified, or ended based on their results over time.

The General Assembly, the Commission, and the utilities recognize that the grid continues to modernize and evolve, and that EV penetration and other DERs will increase. Indeed, the Commission recognized the inevitability of a more decentralized grid years ago, and leaned forward in 2016 by creating the PC 44 work group to examine in detail the distribution grid to ensure customer-centered, affordable, reliable, and environmentally sustainable electric service. These Phase II proposals are a necessary step in the evolving process of grid modernization and will help develop tools to prepare Maryland for such a future.

Regarding today’s constraints, distribution system planning (or DSP) for DERs is becoming a core utility planning function as these resources become more prevalent and desired by customers on the distribution grid. This is the subject of a separate workgroup in the PC44 stakeholder process, which resulted in an interim report² submitted to the General Assembly in December, 2023. The purpose of the Phase II EV programs is to anticipate and help resolve potential problems from occurring in the future.

Maintenance Costs. Staff proposes in its March 28 comments that each of the utilities “credit back to customers the costs of maintenance and networking if the 97 percent uptime standard for the chargers is not met.” Charger uptime is without a doubt of critical importance and we support measures to maximize uptime such as budgets sufficient to pay for the type of specialized maintenance that each of the utilities is currently procuring. Requesting demonstrations of vendor capabilities and evidence of reasonable efforts to maintain chargers are also well within the Commission’s purview.

As we have stated before, the overall EV charging system is a complex mix of systems and equipment, both hardware and software, which all must function together to provide reliable service to the EV charging customer. As the market evolves, companies such as

² See <https://www.psc.state.md.us/wp-content/uploads/Final-2023-DSP-Report.pdf>.

ChargerHelp, which has been hired by BGE, PHI, and Potomac Edison, have emerged to focus on maintenance, interoperability, and reliability issues.

At the same time, the charging market is dynamic with new business models, different software and network management systems, and improved hardware components. Also, although it may seem surprising, it is sometimes difficult to source spare parts quickly from vendors given these rapid changes in industry providers. The federal government (including the U.S. DOE and the Joint Office) along with private industry have been hard at work on these “consumer experience” issues for the past couple years through the ChargeX Consortium, and have developed solid recommendations.³

ATE strongly believes that our members, including the utilities, auto OEMs, and hardware and software providers, are seeking to address these challenges and provide the best consumer experience for EV drivers. Accordingly, we believe it is unfair to impose a penalty such as the loss of funding when the utility takes commercially reasonable efforts to maintain the infrastructure through its contracts with vendors including service level agreements. Therefore, we recommend that you reject Staff’s proposed “crediting back mechanism” as being excessive and punitive at this time.

ZEEVIC. Questions emerged at the hearing about a potential larger role for the Maryland Zero Emission Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Council (“ZEEVIC”), including having ZEEVIC review, approve, and oversee programs such as those proposed in this proceeding. ZEEVIC has been utilized for a number of productive purposes over the years, however it is not structured or authorized to carry out the review, implementation, or oversight of utility programs.

By way of background, ZEEVIC itself is not an organization such as the Commission or other state agency with an established structure and governance with a specific mandate to deploy EV infrastructure or regulate utilities. Instead, it is a council of approximately 30 individuals each representing stakeholder groups such as legislators, state agencies, utilities, vehicle OEMs and retailers, non-governmental organizations, and private citizens. ZEEVIC provides no compensation and meets approximately every other month. While it plays a useful role in facilitating statewide conversations on certain EV topics, it should not be expected to weigh in on the complex issues involved in EV program design, detailed oversight, and technical issues.

³ See <https://driveelectric.gov/chargex-consortium>.

Accordingly, we believe that the existing structures and processes, including the PC44 stakeholder process, are working well and should not be modified. The Commission should continue to exercise its primary responsibility under statute to regulate the rates, terms, and conditions of electric service for the distribution utilities in Maryland.

Respectfully submitted,

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