

Senate Bill 257 – Written Testimony – 10 Feb 2020

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Chairwoman Roegner, Vice-Chair Blessing, Ranking Minority Member Williams, members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee: thank you for the opportunity to offer written testimony on behalf of Senate Bill 257, legislation that would improve access to electric vehicles (EVs) and EV infrastructure for individuals and business fleets in Ohio. If signed into law, SB257 would advance economic development, help clear the air of harmful carbon and particulate emissions, and support the automotive industry in Ohio.

Manufacturers such as GM, Ford, Honda, and Nissan have all announced expanded production of electric vehicles, and the future of both the domestic market and the international export market will rest in car companies' ability to compete to create the best and most affordable emission-free vehicles. The chance is here for Ohio and Ohio workers to be a part of that industry, and to participate and benefit from the growth that industry will undergo. Investments in automotive manufacturing plants in Ohio must be met by a robust local market, as well as a public and a workforce that is familiar with the best technology in both vehicles and charging infrastructure. SB257 represents a chance to Ohio to make that technology available to more people and to attract the drivers and the industry to the state.

SB257 supports fleets as they transition to the clean technology, which will result in savings on fuel and maintenance over the life of the vehicles. The less Ohio businesses have to spend on repairs and gasoline (which the US is a net-importer from foreign sources), the more they will have to invest in their technology, facilities, and staff.

The rebates will have a great effect on ordinary Ohioans ability to purchase clean, emission-free vehicles. Research conducted by the Institute of Transportation Studies at University of California, Davis (ITS-Davis) show that nearly 30% of consumers who buy EVs in early markets cited the federal EV credit as a factor that influenced their purchasing decisions. The availability of that credit had a reduced influence on buyers of the more expensive Tesla Model S and X, and a GREATER effect on buyers of more affordable vehicles, including buyers of Chevrolet EVs made in Ohio.

The rebates will support the EV market until it becomes self-sustaining, and are designed to expire. This is a strategy that has worked in the past across a number of important, high-tech, and profitable industries; telecommunications, aerospace, computers, and pharmaceuticals are examples of new market sectors that launched and flourished thanks to good policies and early support.

The electric vehicle market is growing, and investments in the electric vehicle infrastructure and the people of Ohio will make and drive them will pay dividends in the future. Ohio has a chance to lead in this automotive space, and we believe that SB257 is a significant chance to show and develop that leadership; we urge your careful consideration of this bill.