

Ohio Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee
Proponent Testimony on Senate Bill 307
Testimony of Gary Heaton
Chapter Leader, Drive Electric Cincinnati
April 1, 2022



To Members of the Energy and Public Utilities Committee:

My name is Gary Heaton, Chapter Leader of Drive Electric Cincinnati. Drive Electric Cincinnati brings together electric vehicle (EV) owners and enthusiasts in the Cincinnati area to provide EV education and make driving EVs more accessible.

With over \$330 billion in announced investment, auto manufacturers have committed themselves to transitioning to electric vehicles. But the location for much of that investment remains open. With the transformation to electric already underway, I'd like to share my perspective on how SB 307 positions Ohio to succeed by making our state a more attractive place to make and buy an electric vehicle.

Boost Ohio as the place to *make* electric vehicles

SB307's funding for factory retooling and workforce development is key to protecting jobs. A local example: when I visited Ford Motor's Sharonville transmission plant just north of Cincinnati, I was struck by how huge it was. It has over 1,700 employees. Few appreciate that the product the plant makes – automatic transmissions—are not needed in electric vehicles, which use a single gear. This plant, plus those at many other Ohio facilities making engines and other components specific to internal combustion vehicles, will need to retool and its employees retrain.

Boost Ohio as a place to *buy* electric vehicles

SB307's EV purchase incentive and improved utility support for EV charging can help move Ohio from a laggard to a leader in EV business attractiveness. Drivers seeking to buy an EV in Ohio encounter barriers that SB307 helps overcome:

- **Availability:** Ohio drivers have a smaller selection of electric vehicles. For example, my local Chevy dealer lost a sale when I bought my Chevy Bolt out-of-state because GM waited nearly a year before starting to sell Bolts in Ohio. GM initially sold Bolts in states with more supportive policies. SB307's incentives would make OH much more supportive.
- **Affordability:** Electric vehicles' purchase cost is the most universal barrier to ownership I hear in my group's EV education efforts. SB307's purchase incentives reduce the cost of the purchase or lease at time of sale—no waiting for a refund. Importantly, the incentives help address affordability by applying to used cars, not just new ones.
- **Charging:** Fast chargers outside Ohio cities are few and far between. Our local utility has pilot proposals for supporting EV charging that have not advanced to PUCO approval. To install badly needed DC Fast chargers, utility make-ready investments are frequently required. SB307's update of utility regulations, PUCO guidance, and charging infrastructure planning would provide a breakthrough.

This is an exciting time in the transition to electric vehicles. In 2023 more manufacturers will make electric versions of Ohioans' favorite vehicles—pickup trucks and SUVs. This will boost interest in electric vehicles in new groups of drivers. Ford and GM together already have more than 300,000 reservations for their electric pickup trucks!

Let's prevent Ohio from being left behind in this transition. On behalf of hundreds of Drive Electric Cincinnati members, I urge you to support SB307 to boost Ohioans' ability to build, buy and charge electric vehicles in Ohio.