

Senate Transportation Committee
Chairwoman Kunze, Vice Chair Reineke, and Ranking Member Antonio
Testimony of Ben Lachman, Co-Founder of Nice Mohawk
RE: Ohio Transportation Budget, House Bill 74

March 9, 2021

Chairwoman Kunze, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Member Antonio and members of the Senate Transportation Committee. My name is Ben Lachman, and I am the co-founder of Nice Mohawk, a digital product studio with a location in Athens, Ohio. We make top-shelf apps, design new products, and help companies make smart decisions.

As an entrepreneur with more than 15 years of experience building clean-tech products for startups, small businesses, and Fortune 500 companies, I make my living by improving user experiences. Our company has also have made a commitment to improving the health and economic development of our community. That is why I am asking for members of this committee to support measures that encourage electric vehicle (EV) production and purchase in Ohio rather than throwing up roadblocks.

Cars, trucks, and buses powered by fossil fuels are major contributors to air pollution. While this air pollution carries significant risks for human health and the environment, through EV technologies, we can reduce emissions from these vehicles and promote better health. There have been significant strides made in air pollution reduction in the Appalachian region of Ohio, but we have so far to go.

Over the next decade, automakers are projected to invest \$300 billion in electric vehicles. Ohio's automotive sector currently employs more than 108,000 people, and that number will only increase as EV ownership increases and related supply chain manufacturing jobs grow. This is welcome news for Athens County.

However, the \$200 annual registration fee for EVs and \$100 fee for hybrids in Ohio are the highest in the nation. Electric vehicle owners are prepared to pay their share for road maintenance and repair and other infrastructure developments paid for by these fees. But the long-term disproportionate fees for electric and hybrid vehicles send a clear message to automotive manufacturers that Ohio is not interested in expanding their advanced transportation market.

I urge members of this committee to consider reducing these fees to the national average rate of \$100 for EVs and \$50 for plug-in hybrids. This will not result in a significant decrease to revenues to the state but will make a real difference to those weighing the benefits of purchasing an electric vehicle.

It is time to make the decision to invest in the next generation of economic development for Ohio—a clean transportation market. Thank you for taking the time to consider my testimony, and I hope you will support reducing the up-front and annual registration fees for EVs and hybrid vehicles in the state transportation budget.