



OEC [Action Fund]

Proponent Testimony - Ohio House Bill 546 (Miller/Weinstein)
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November 18, 2020

Good morning, Chair Green, Vice Chair McClain, Ranking Member Sheehy and members of the House Transportation and Public Safety Committee. My name is Miranda Leppla and I am the Vice President of Energy Policy for the Ohio Environmental Council (OEC) Action Fund. Thank you for the opportunity to provide our written support for Ohio House Bill 546 today.

The OEC Action Fund works toward a clean energy future to ensure Ohioans have clean air to breathe and clean water to drink. A clean energy future includes reducing reliance on fossil fuels in our electric sector, promoting renewable energy and energy efficiency, and supporting the electrification of our transportation systems.

Because Ohio's transportation infrastructure is heavily funded through the gas tax, an annual registration fee was passed as part of the 2019 transportation budget to ensure that electric vehicle (EV) and hybrid vehicle owners pay their fair share for upkeep of our transportation infrastructure. The OEC Action Fund agrees with this premise, however the registration fees passed as part of the transportation budget last year are simply too high on EVs and plug-in EVs, and should not be imposed upon pure hybrid vehicles that already pay a fair share through purchasing gasoline. The \$200 annual fee on EVs and plug-in hybrid vehicles, and \$100 annual fee on all hybrid vehicles amounts to a penalty on EV and hybrid owners, and will stunt the growing market in Ohio.

This is why the OEC Action Fund supports House Bill 546, which will help correct the overly burdensome fee on Ohio's EV and hybrid vehicle owners, and ensure Ohio moves quickly to become a leader in the electric vehicle transportation economy. House Bill 546 reduces fees that were imposed on plug-in electric vehicles and hybrid vehicles by half, and reclassifies "plug-in electric motor vehicles" as "hybrid vehicles", subjecting

them to the lower of the two fees since they already pay some taxes through purchasing gasoline.

House Bill 546 reclassifies EVs, plug-in hybrids, and hybrids as follows:

- “Plug-in electric motor vehicles” are defined in House Bill 546 as passenger cars that are powered wholly by a battery cell energy system that can be recharged via an external source of power.
- “Hybrid motor vehicles” are defined as passenger cars that either (1) that have a combustion engine as well as a battery cell energy system that **can be** recharged by an external source of power, or (2) that have a combustion engine that **cannot** be recharged via an external source of electricity, but can be recharged by other vehicle mechanisms that capture and store electric energy.

Under House Bill 546, plug-in electric motor vehicles would pay \$100 per year instead of \$200, while “hybrid motor vehicles” would be required to pay a \$50 annual registration fee instead of \$100. The OEC Action Fund strongly supports the reduced fees on plug-in electric motor vehicles and hybrid motor vehicles that can be recharged by an external source of power to ensure those vehicles are paying a fair share, reducing the overly burdensome fees imposed last year. The OEC Action Fund further recommends eliminating any additional registration fee on hybrid motor vehicle passenger cars that have combustion engines which are NOT recharged via an external source of electricity, as these owners pay their fair share through purchasing gas to power vehicles already.

The OEC Action Fund also recommends that any annual fee on EVs dedicate a portion of that fee for EV charging infrastructure build-out across the state. EV owners face challenges in traveling across Ohio because electric charging infrastructure is not located in all parts of the state, especially in more rural areas. If we are going to require EV owners to pay into a fund for road infrastructure and maintenance, they should also be able to drive anywhere in the state they wish without worrying about whether they’ll be able to charge their vehicle and make it home.

The OEC Action Fund believes we should all pay our fair share for Ohio’s road infrastructure, and this bill would ensure EV and hybrid owners aren’t paying an artificially and unfairly high amount. We look forward to working with the committee to eliminate the fee on passenger cars that have combustion engines which are NOT recharged via an external source of electricity, and determining a reasonable set aside for electric vehicle infrastructure build out. Thank you.