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Committee: Environment and Transportation

Testimony on: HB7 – “Electric Vehicle Recharging Equipment Rebate Program – Renewal”

Position: Support

Hearing Date: February 2, 2023

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club supports HB7 which would extend the duration of the Electric Vehicle (EV) Recharging Equipment Rebate Program through 2027. The bill would increase the total amount of rebates issued annually under the program from \$1.8 million to \$2 million, limit the issuance of rebates to one charging system per individual per address, and authorize the Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) to offer additional benefits for the installation of EV recharging equipment in multifamily housing, planned urban developments and condominiums in environmental justice communities.

The program offers rebates to cover 40% of the costs of acquiring and installing charging equipment for residential and commercial customers. Renewing the program would continue to reduce the financial burden of acquiring and installing EV charging stations and encourage more EV adoption by individuals and businesses.

Incentivizing the purchase of EVs and installation of EV charging equipment is important because EVs emit no greenhouse gas or toxic pollution from their tailpipes and have much lower fuel and maintenance costs than vehicles that run on fossil fuels. Greater use of EVs is important because transportation is the largest contributor to climate-damaging greenhouse gas emissions in our country and state. Toxic emissions from gas and diesel-powered vehicles are linked to various cancers, heart disease, asthma, emphysema, other respiratory diseases, and premature death. Vehicle tailpipe emissions also contribute to ozone, smog and acid rain. More than 85% of Marylanders live in counties that do not meet federal clean air standards for ozone, due in large part to vehicle tailpipe emissions.

Allowing the MEA more flexibility to offer benefit for the installation of charging equipment in multifamily housing, planned urban development and condominiums located in environmental justice communities would allow the state to increase the likelihood that rebates for EV charger installation are equitably distributed in the state.

In summary, passage of HB7 would continue an important rebate program that encourages more EV adoption by individuals and businesses in our state and helps reduce climate-damaging greenhouse gas emissions. We urge a favorable report on this bill.

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Founded in 1892, the Sierra Club is America’s oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization. The Maryland Chapter has over 70,000 members and supporters, and the Sierra Club nationwide has over 800,000 members and nearly four million supporters.