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**Committee:** Economic Matters

**Testimony on:** HB834 – “Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure - Requirements (Electric Vehicle Charging Reliability Act)”

**Position:** Support

**Hearing Date:** March 2, 2023

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club supports HB834. The bill would require the Public Service Commission to expand the Electric Vehicle (EV) Pilot Program to allow participating electric utility companies to install EV charging stations in new and existing multifamily dwellings in underserved communities where at least 25% of the residents are low income, at least 50% identify as nonwhite, or at least 15% of the residents have limited English proficiency. Participating utilities would be required to maintain adequate staff to monitor, assess, and repair EV charging stations they install. The bill also would require electric utilities operating an EV charging network in the state to ensure EV charging stations in their network have an average annual uptime of 97% or greater.

HB834 would bring multiple benefits. It would encourage installation of more EV charging stations in the state and thereby encourage more people to purchase or lease EVs. The bill would ensure more charging stations are installed in underserved communities, which may not have as many charging stations now compared to other areas where moderate and higher income residents live and travel.

Establishing a statewide requirement that all EV charging networks in the state that are operated by electric utilities be properly maintained should greatly increase the likelihood that EV drivers who stop at charging stations in the state will find them to be working. A number of charging stations installed around the state at the present time are not working, according to anecdotal reports from EV drivers.

Incentivizing the purchase or lease of EVs is particularly important because EVs emit no greenhouse gas (GHG) or other pollution from their tailpipes and have much lower fuel and maintenance costs than vehicles that run on fossil fuels. Emissions from the tailpipes of gasoline and diesel-powered vehicles make transportation the largest contributor to climate-damaging GHG emissions in our state and country, and a major source of toxic emissions that 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. This bill would help change that.

In summary, HB834 would bring many benefits to the state, and 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.