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Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Testimony on: SB477 - “Residential Construction or Significant Renovation - Electric Vehicle Charging”

Position: Support

Hearing Date: February 14, 2023

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club supports SB447. The bill would specify requirements for the installation of electric vehicle charging equipment during the construction or significant renovation of housing units that include at least one garage, carport, or driveway for each housing unit. New townhouses and multifamily buildings under construction that do not have at least one garage, carport or driveway for each housing unit but do have off-street communal parking must include at least one communal parking space for each 25 residential units featuring an electric vehicle (EV) charging station capable of at least Level 2 charging (alternating current electrical service with a minimum of 208 volts). Each communal parking space featuring EV charging equipment must be marked for EV charging only.

Current law requires the builder or builder’s agent of new single-family detached homes and townhouses with at least a garage, carport, or driveway for each housing unit to provide the home buyer the option to have an EV charging station installed capable of at least Level 2 charging or a dedicated electric line to support the addition of a charging station at a later date. SB477 would alter and strengthen that requirement so that EV charging equipment must be included in new single family detached homes, townhouses, and multifamily residential buildings with communal parking.

Transportation is now the largest contributor to climate-damaging greenhouse gas emissions in this country and is also a major source of toxic emissions including benzene, nitrogen oxides, and sulfur dioxide. Emissions from vehicle tailpipes are hazardous to human health and are linked to various cancers, heart disease, asthma, emphysema, other respiratory diseases, and premature death. Unlike gas and diesel-powered vehicles, plug-in EVs require little or no fossil fuel and emit little or no air pollution from their tailpipes.

In summary, SB477 would enable more plug-in EVs in our state to be used and recharged when parked. Approval of this bill also would encourage more people to purchase, lease, or operate plug-in EVs, which would reduce our dependence on petroleum and be better for our health and the environment. We urge this committee to issue a favorable report on SB477.

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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.