

Contact: Ryan McKinnon
703-772-0123

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Bill to grow access to EV charging market filed in Oklahoma Legislature

Legislation removes current barriers that undercut private investment in EV charging

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma took a step toward growing the electric vehicle (EV) charging market, as Sen. Chuck Hall filed legislation in the Oklahoma Senate that would encourage private retailers to invest in EV chargers by removing existing market barriers to providing EV charging. Rep. Kyle Hilbert will champion the legislation in the House of Representatives.

“Senator Hall and Representative Hilbert recognize that Oklahoma will never have the EV charging network the state needs unless lawmakers fix the current broken system,” said Jay Smith, executive director of Charge Ahead Partnership, a coalition of businesses, individuals and organizations working to expand access to the EV charging marketplace. “This legislation lifts the major barriers that have hurt private investment in the EV charging marketplace.”

The growing number of EVs on Oklahoma’s roads has attracted interest from private businesses who want to offer EV charging services, but public utilities in the state have an unfair competitive advantage, which has prevented others from investing in the EV charging market in Oklahoma.

The bill aims to create the necessary market reforms through three key provisions. The legislation would:

- Prohibit public utilities from using ratepayer funds to subsidize their own EV charging stations. When power companies raise the power bills for all of their monthly customers and use that revenue to build EV charging stations, it results in higher costs for all consumers and discourages private businesses from investing in EV charging. This practice creates an uneven playing field that discourages private businesses from investing in EV charging.
- Direct utilities to establish a rate for the sale of electricity used in EV charging. Under the current rate structure, private businesses offering high-speed charging incur a significant “demand charge” based on the maximum amount of electricity pulled at once. These unpredictable and fluctuating fees can easily double or triple a retailer’s monthly power bill at a level that cannot be reasonably passed along to the consumer. The legislation directs utilities to establish a standard volumetric rate that covers the utility’s cost of both generating and delivering the electricity.
- Codify policy to ensure that entities selling electricity for EV charging should not be treated as utilities by the state.

Senator Hall, who serves as the Vice-Chairman of the Senate Appropriations and Budget Committee, Chairman of the OMES/ARPA Oversight Committee as well as Vice-Chair of the Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee, said that the future of electric vehicles in the state depends on lawmakers creating an environment that attracts private investment in the EV charging space.

“The most logical place for EV drivers to charge up while on a long road trip is at the existing retailers and commercial locations that already dot the interstate,” Hall said. “This bill would make that possible and establish Oklahoma as a leader in developing common-sense and forward-thinking EV charging policy. Oklahoma’s public utilities are vital partners in the effort to expand the EV charging network. Our legislation would ensure they are able to focus on what they do best, which is generating and distributing electricity.”

House Speaker Pro-Tempore Hilbert will champion the legislation when it gets to the House. Hilbert said the bill represents a win for EV drivers, free enterprise and power company customers.

“If our legislation becomes law, you are going to see more EV charging stations as private investment in EV charging will be drawn to Oklahoma,” Hilbert said. “And power company customers won’t be asked to cover the costs of these EV stations, which is good news for anyone paying a monthly power bill.”

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*To learn more about **Charge Ahead Partnership (CAP)** and join our efforts to help expand America's EV charging network please visit www.chargeaheadpartnership.com. In addition to joining CAP you can stay connected with us by following us on social media on Twitter at [@EV_ChargeAhead](https://twitter.com/EV_ChargeAhead), Facebook at [@ChargeAheadPartnership](https://www.facebook.com/ChargeAheadPartnership) and on Instagram at [@EVChargeAhead](https://www.instagram.com/EVChargeAhead).*