

Contact: Ryan McKinnon
703-772-0123

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South Carolina regulators reject Duke Energy request to expand its ratepayer-funded EV charging program

In a win for ratepayers and the free market, Public Service Commissioners push back against Duke Energy's encroachment on the EV charging marketplace.

COLUMBIA – Charge Ahead Partnership applauds the recent decision by the South Carolina Public Service Commission (PSC) that will protect residents from being forced to pay for Duke Energy-owned electric vehicle (EV) charging stations.

On Jan. 10, the PSC denied a request from Duke to continue and expand its ratepayer-funded EV charging program. This decision brings to a stop the practice of Duke charging all customers through their electric bills to pay for its EV charging stations, even if the customer does not own an electric vehicle. The ruling also ensures private businesses offering EV charging won't face unfair competition from a ratepayer-funded monopoly that has a guaranteed rate of return.

"This decision is good for ratepayers who should not be bankrolling Duke's EV charging stations, and it will actually spur more investment in EV charging stations by sparking a competitive marketplace for EV charging in South Carolina," said Jay Smith, Charge Ahead Partnership Executive Director. "Too often, businesses that want to offer EV charging cannot do so because Duke controls the marketplace by hiking everyone's power bills to pay for utility-owned chargers."

"As long as private businesses cannot break into the EV charging market because Duke Energy is using ratepayer funds to take over the charging marketplace, South Carolina will never meet its EV charging goals," Smith said.

Duke is one of several power companies to begin passing along the costs of building, owning and operating EV charging stations to their power customers. The South Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff, a consumer watchdog agency, noted that Duke's costly program had been paid for by the vast majority of South Carolina residents who do not own an EV.

"Importantly, the \$773,622 in combined spend by (Duke Energy) on their DC Fast Charge Programs is recovered from all ratepayers, including non-participants," the Office of Regulatory Staff stated, referring to customers who do not own an electric vehicle but pay higher bills to support Duke's EV charging operation.

While the PSC decision applies only to Duke's recent request to expand the program, state lawmakers will consider legislation this year (Senate Bill 684) that would prohibit all investor-owned utilities from using ratepayer funds to own and operate charging stations. Smith hopes lawmakers follow the example of the PSC and protect ratepayers and create certainty for private investment.

"The PSC's action makes it clear that ratepayers should not be on the hook for the utility's charging program, especially when private businesses are eager to invest," he said. "Now it is time for legislators to enact this commonsense policy."

Charge Ahead Partnership is a coalition of businesses, organizations and individuals working to expand the nation's EV charging network.

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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 X 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).*