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Private retailers say they can't justify investing in EV charging, as Pennsylvania power companies use ratepayer funds to compete

Long-term investment in EV charging could disappear if a handful of power companies control market.

HARRISBURG – Pennsylvania's utilities are discouraging private investment in electric vehicle (EV) charging, according to testimony offered during a House committee hearing on the future of EV charging in the commonwealth, held Wednesday.

As more Pennsylvanians buy EVs, the need for reliable and accessible EV charging has grown substantially. On March 6, the Pennsylvania House Consumer Protection, Technology and Utilities Committee met to discuss the challenges facing EV charging expansion.

Sheetz, the Altoona-based fuel retailer with locations in 24 states, has been buying, installing and operating EV charging stations at its locations since 2012. However, Sheetz Energy and Sustainability Manager Eric McCrum told committee members that Sheetz couldn't justify its expansion into EV charging in Pennsylvania if electric utilities were allowed to continue using ratepayer funds to directly compete with the private marketplace.

"We are eager to invest and continue investing in EV infrastructure, but we need the right signals to do so in a fair, competitive market. Allowing utilities to ratebase EV charging infrastructure is an insurmountable competitive advantage that we just cannot compete with from a pricing standpoint," McCrum said.

Rep. Craig Williams pointed out that private entities have to invest their own funds to offer EV charging.

"You're not able to take your costs for EV infrastructure buildout and socialize that over the entire community," Williams said. "You've got to bare those costs yourself."

Allowing utilities to use ratepayer funds to compete with the private marketplace could deter any further investment from Sheetz and other businesses in Pennsylvania.

"If utilities were permitted to continue expanding their EV charging infrastructure, it would create major challenges to the business case and justification of continuing that investment, not just for Sheetz, but for convenience store retailers and fuel retailers across the state," McCrum said.

Charge Ahead Partnership, a coalition of businesses advocating for free market solutions to expand the nation's EV charging marketplace, underscored the comments made by Sheetz.

"Pennsylvania's power companies are jeopardizing the state's EV charging marketplace. When an established retailer like Sheetz can't compete because of utilities seeking to monopolize the marketplace, what chance does a small EV charging entrepreneur stand?" said Charge Ahead Partnership Executive Director Jay Smith. "It's time for policy makers to establish policies that attract, rather than deter, private investment."

*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://facebook.com/ChargeAheadPartnership) and on Instagram at [@EVChargeAhead](https://instagram.com/EVChargeAhead).*