

Contact: Ryan McKinnon
703-772-0123



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South Carolina lawmakers ensure businesses can offer EV charging without competition from power company

COLUMBIA – Charge Ahead Partnership applauds South Carolina’s lawmakers for passing S. 275, legislation that establishes South Carolina as a free market for electric vehicle (EV) charging. Last week lawmakers unanimously passed the bill, which was sponsored by Sen. Larry Grooms and signed into law by Gov. Henry McMaster on Thursday, May 8. Representatives Bill Herbkersman and Gil Gatch championed the bill in the House.

The legislation prohibits the state’s electric utilities from using ratepayer funds to build, own and operate charging stations, giving private businesses assurance that they can invest in this growing field without facing unfair competition from the power company.

“South Carolina has been a leader in many aspects of EV manufacturing, attracting billions of investment dollars with free market policies,” said Charge Ahead Partnership Executive Director Jay Smith. “This legislation establishes the state as a policy leader as well. S. 275 lays the groundwork for a competitive EV charging marketplace, where businesses and entrepreneurs can invest with confidence.”

Charge Ahead Partnership is a coalition of organizations, businesses and individuals, working to establish a level playing field for EV charging across the United States.

As EVs have grown in popularity, businesses have sought to provide charging services, but in many states these businesses find themselves competing with their own power companies. Ratepayer-funded chargers undercut the private marketplace, driving investment away and limiting the opportunity that businesses have to capitalize on EV charging.

“As EVs become more common on South Carolina roads, I want the best charging providers to emerge. The only way that will happen is through free-market competition,” Grooms said. “The liquid fuel industry is among the most competitive marketplaces in America, with transparent pricing and retailers furiously trying to outdo their competition. There is no reason EV charging should be any different.”

Advocates for this policy have also touted its benefits for consumers. Residents in areas with utility-owned charging networks often end up paying higher power bills for a service that they do not use.

"We should never ask the public to fund something the private sector is willing to invest in," Herbkersman said. "This legislation will attract private investment and bring the free-market competition that comes with it."

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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).*