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CHAPTER

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June 17, 2013

The Honorable Michael J. Rodrigues
Chairman, Joint Committee on Revenue
State House, Room 213B
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Jay R. Kaufman
Chairman, Joint Committee on Revenue
State House, Room 34
Boston, MA 02133

Re: H. 2594 An Act to promote the use of electric vehicles

Dear Chairman Rodrigues, Chairman Kaufman, and Honorable Members of the Committee,

Thank you for providing the opportunity to offer comments on H 2594, "An Act to promote the use of electric vehicles." The Sierra Club wishes to express our support in favor of passing strong and effective legislation that will result in the increase of electric vehicles. The Sierra Club believes that this bill will go a long way in incentivizing the purchase and use of electric vehicles (EVs), which will help Massachusetts in its critical efforts to slash greenhouse gas emissions and our dependence on oil.

The Sierra Club is the oldest and largest non-profit, non-partisan environmental organization in the country. With over a forty year history in this chapter, the Massachusetts Sierra Club represents about 22,000 members throughout the state and over 1 million members and supporters nationwide. We fight for clean air, clean water, the preservation of the Commonwealth's most precious natural spaces, and healthy, vibrant communities. The Sierra Club's national Green Fleets & Electric Vehicles Initiative is headquartered in Boston. We are deeply familiar with the progress that so many other states have made on this issue. For the health and future of our children, we know it is important to rapidly incentivize thousands of other Commonwealth residents to make the switch to EVs.

Oil Independence and Clean Energy

As we all know, gasoline prices are volatile and are, over the long term, rising. Electric vehicles enable drivers to fill up on predictably affordable domestic electricity at a cost equivalent to approximately \$1 per gallon. Americans send up to a third of a trillion dollars overseas each year to purchase foreign oil, often produced by nations that are unstable or unfriendly to US policies. Foreign oil purchases are also responsible for about 50% of the US trade deficit. As Americans struggle to cope with rising and erratic petroleum prices, greater independence from oil means an economically stronger and more secure America.

Furthermore, electricity sources in New England are cleaner than they are in much of the country. Consequently, Massachusetts is one of the best places for drivers to switch to EVs. According to data from the EPA and the Department of Energy, an all-electric Nissan Leaf driven in New England emits about 64% less global warming pollution than a standard

Honda Accord. A plug-in hybrid electric vehicle can emit about 48% less global warming pollution than a gas-only Honda Accord. Of course, our electricity sources are getting cleaner over time, so EVs, too, get even cleaner over time.

Environmental and Public Health Protection

Today, the transportation sector is a significant cause of both global warming pollution and local smog and asthma related pollutants, and car and truck innovation is critical to pollution reduction. Electric vehicles have little or no tailpipe pollution, and when compared to nearly all conventional vehicles on the road today, they are responsible for lower overall emissions of CO₂ and many harmful pollutants, even when power plant emissions are factored in.¹

Where utilities provide or individuals choose cleaner power options, EVs can be much cleaner immediately, and with responsible policies and technologies to increasingly clean up our electricity sector, all EVs become cleaner over time – ultimately becoming true zero emissions vehicles.

By the end of this year, there will be more than 20 new models of plug-in electric vehicles on the market. Many plug-in vehicle models, after the federal tax credit, are priced for the mass market, making them accessible to the general public, and fueling and maintenance costs are much lower than fossil fuel-powered vehicles. However, the initial purchase price of the vehicles is a deterrent for some people. With the incentives proposed in H. 2594, we can help level the playing field, making electric vehicles more attractive, thus increasing their use. Now is the perfect time for us to incentivize these vehicles.

Massachusetts is currently behind other states like California, Oregon, Washington, Hawaii, Texas, and Tennessee in efforts to build public EV charging stations and public policies to promote and incentivize EVs among consumers. Fortunately, this bill would have a positive impact in making Massachusetts a leader in being EV-ready.

The Sierra Club is cognizant of the fact that many important transportation and infrastructure projects are funded by the gas tax as well as other fees and taxes that electric vehicle drivers may avoid, be exempted from and/or receive rebates for. A few thousand EVs on Massachusetts roads in the next couple of years will not have a significant impact on the state's revenue, but they will reduce greenhouse gas emissions while significantly raising awareness in the public about our addiction to foreign oil and the urgency of the climate crisis.

Use of HOV Lanes

We would also like to express our support for the portion of this bill that will permit electric vehicles to utilize high occupancy vehicle lanes (HOV). The goal of HOV lanes is to promote environmentally friendly driving, and electric vehicles certainly satisfy this requirement. California, Maryland, New York and Virginia are among the states currently permitting electric vehicles to use HOV lanes. Drivers have found this policy to be very appealing.²³⁴⁵ A decal or special license plate would sufficiently indicate to traffic enforcement that these vehicles are permitted to travel in these lanes.

Charging Stations in Municipal and Publicly Owned Parking Areas

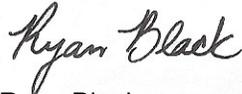
The Sierra Club supports the section of the bill requiring that parking areas with capacity for at least 100 vehicles be required to include a minimum of one EV charging space for each one hundred parking spaces. One of the greatest challenges to adoption of EV technology is the lack of charging infrastructure away from private homes, because there is a limit on the distance one can travel on one electric charge. Citizens already spend large amounts of time at their places of work and in shopping centers. If these locations provided charging opportunities to drivers, then the number of miles available to a driver in a given day could be as much as doubled.

The Sierra Club strongly supports this proposed bill and respectfully requests that this committee report this bill favorably. Furthermore, we hope that H. 2594 receives the full support by all members of the Senate and House of Representatives. It is only by a commitment to programs such as this that we will successfully achieve the goal of combating global climate change.

Thank you for your time and focus on this important issue.

This testimony was prepared by Tara Burke, Legislative Action Committee, Massachusetts Sierra Club; and Gina Coplon-Newfield, National Director of Green Fleets & Electric Vehicles Initiative, Sierra Club

Respectfully,



Ryan Black
Director
Massachusetts Sierra Club

¹ "Electric Vehicles:Factsheet." *Electric Vehicles: Factsheet*. Sierra Club, 2013. Web. 04 Apr. 2013.

² Eligible Vehicles - Single Occupant Carpool Lane Use Stickers." *Eligible Vehicles - Single Occupant Carpool Lane Use Stickers*. State of California, 21 Mar. 2013. Web. 04 Apr. 2013.

³ Plug-in Electric Vehicle (PEV) High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lane Exemption." *Alternative Fuels Data Center*:. State of Maryland, 4 Apr. 2013. Web. 04 Apr. 2013.

⁴ "New York's Clean Pass Program." *Department of Transportation*. State of New York, 16 Jan. 2013. Web. 4 Apr. 2013.

⁵ "High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lanes - Rules and FAQs." *High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lanes - Rules and FAQs*. State of Virginia, 16 Jan. 2013. Web. 04 Apr. 2013.