



Inside Energy

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RE: Please give to the rich to fuel their expensive electric cars

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It has been proposed the Delaware Public Service Commission force Delmarva Power to invest millions of dollars for public battery electric vehicle (BEV) chargers paid for by non-EV owning electric customers. This is on top of up to \$11,500 in tax and other subsidies these BEV owners receive. Public comment is needed to stop this proposal.

BEVs, can cost twice as much as similar gasoline powered cars. Predictably, the medium annual household income for EV owners was \$125,000 in a 2017 Carmax study, about twice the income of the average Delaware household. About 80 percent of charging is done overnight at home for convenience, and lower charging rates. The U.S. Department of Energy reports there are twice as many public charging stations needed to serve the tiny fleet of BEVs in Delaware, perhaps 700, or 0.1 percent of the vehicles registered in Delaware. Those chargers are losing money because they sit idle 90 percent of the time, but were installed by private entities to support BEV sales, or to attract those high income owners as customers.

However, one of the perceived barriers to selling more BEVs is range anxiety, the concern there will be no charging station when the juice runs out. It's not an unrealistic fear since the batteries are basically 1000 pound cellphone batteries. BEV proponents think having many more public charging stations than needed is the answer, but entrepreneurs are not going to build more money losing excess capacity.

BEV proponents answer across the country is to get regulated electric utilities to build public chargers with utility commission approval. The utilities get a guaranteed rate of return, often around 10 percent, for money they invest, so no worry about losing money. The cost is paid by all electric customers on their electric bills, including the estimated 30 percent of electric customers in energy poverty, defined as those spending more than 10 percent of their income on energy. All this for the benefit of a few high earners who, by the way, skip paying gasoline taxes to fund highway construction and repairs.

This reverse Robin Hood proposal for Delaware has been made by the National Resource Defense Council (NRDC). This is the same group that continually sues federal agencies like the EPA for not being extreme enough on environmental issues. The benefit of BEVs is supposedly less global warming, and less air pollution. However, Delmarva testified under oath in an earlier case the charged BEV will actually leave the station with electrons from whatever mix of generation sources was running at the time in a thirteen state regional grid including coal, natural gas, and oil fired power plants. It turns out there are no, or minor reductions of greenhouse gases, and actually higher emission of air pollutants from BEVs when all factors are considered. By the way, Tesla is not part of this problem as they build their own chargers.

Your comments to the PSC can sway the outcome. Send your written comments electronically to psc@delaware.gov and include "PSC Docket No. 19-0377" in the subject line by October, 17.