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PUBLIC EV CHARGING MAY GET PRIVATE BOOST

By Lauren Jessop, The Center Square

Building out public electric vehicle charging can cost state and local governments less than they think, according to a proposal moving through the legislature.

House Bill 1474, introduced by Rep. Joe Ciresi, D-Royersford, would allow businesses to tap into private funding he says will encourage them to invest in the development of the statewide electric vehicle charging infrastructure. Doing so will install EV charging at shopping centers, apartment buildings, and “countless other places” for employees and customers.

And, it won’t ask everyone else to share the load, Ciresi told The Center Square. Instead, property owners who build the stations can pay back the cost through their own tax bills.

On Sept. 26, the House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee passed the bill on a party line vote. If enacted, it would expand Pennsylvania’s Property-Assessed Clean Energy program, C-PACE, to include EV charging infrastructure projects.

“As more and more Pennsylvanians purchase electric vehicles, we need to make sure our state’s infrastructure is ready,” Ciresi said. “This bill will help expand charging access for local EV drivers as well

as tourists, and I’m thankful for the committee’s support.”

C-PACE allows property owners to obtain low-cost, long-term financing for energy efficient equipment, renewable energy, water conservation, resiliency, and indoor air quality projects.

It is a voluntary program administered by Sustainable Energy Fund, in partnership with Keystone Energy Efficiency Alliance.

Commercial and agricultural property owners living in participating localities may develop a clean energy project and secure private financing. The loan payment is added to their property tax bill and collected as an assessment by county and municipal authorities.

Local governments can request “C-PACE in a Box” which includes a sample resolution, a summary of guidelines, templates, and other key documents needed to establish a program. To date, 26 of the state’s 67 counties have C-PACE programs.

In August, Gov. Josh Shapiro announced Pennsylvania will spend \$34 million — part of a five-year, \$172 million federal grant — on electric vehicle charging stations to include 54 projects in 35 counties. As of 2022, there were nearly 43,000 electric vehicles, or EVs, registered in the state — an increase of 82 percent from 2021.

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