



Testimony to the Joint Committee on Transportation on House | Bill 4060

February 19, 2018

**Angela Crowley-Koch, Legislative Director
Oregon Environmental Council**

Founded in 1968, the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership-based organization. We advance innovative, collaborative and equitable solutions to Oregon's environmental challenges for today and future generations.

Oregon Environmental Council supports HB 4060 with the electric vehicles fixes as currently written.

The electric vehicle rebate program created by the transportation package is of utmost importance to improve our air and our climate. Oregon is substantially behind in meeting our greenhouse gas reduction goals and the biggest problem is our transportation sector, which is responsible for almost 40% of the state's CO₂ emissions. Reducing transportation sector emissions was one of the expressed goals of the 2017 transportation package. Pollution from transportation emissions also disproportionately impact low-income communities, who are more likely to live near highways and other sources of vehicle-related pollution.

Electric vehicles make a significant dent in our transportation emissions, and Oregon needs to do more to promote their adoption. The example of other states (California, Massachusetts, Georgia, Colorado, etc.) shows that the best way to do this is through an electric vehicle rebate. Again, we commend the Oregon legislature for wisely including an electric vehicle rebate program in the transportation package.

The electric vehicle fixes in HB 4060 were carefully developed, vetted and improved upon by DEQ's Rules Advisory Committee (RAC). That RAC – which included Oregon Environmental Council – was made up of policy experts and stakeholders from the auto industry, equity groups, environmental organizations and public utilities.

As a member of the electric vehicle RAC, OEC supports the following consensus agreements reached by the RAC members and reflected in HB 4060:

- DEQ should offer the maximum rebate amount.
- HB 2017 should be amended regarding elements of the Charge Ahead program.
 - While the air quality focus is important, making the requirements to scrap an older vehicle and limiting rebates to areas with poor air quality should be changed to give DEQ the discretion to determine whether to make them a requirement. At this point, it is better not to have additional requirements for low- and moderate-income households so that electric vehicle benefits can be made widely available throughout Oregon.
 - The rebate for low or moderate-income households who purchase or lease a new or used electric vehicle should remain.
 - Additionally, the requirement for DEQ to conduct specific outreach in these communities, as well as the minimum 10% set aside of rebate funds for this program must be retained.

- It is also important that 24-month leases qualify for the same rebate as vehicle purchases. Leases constitute the majority of electric vehicle sales and we should maximize the ability of the program to electrify our transportation sector by putting more electric vehicles on the road in Oregon. Various other states that have electric vehicle rebates apply those rebates to leases.
- Low and moderate-income households that qualify for the Charge Ahead program should be able to combine the Charge Ahead Rebate with the regular electric vehicle rebate so that purchasing an electric vehicle is a viable option for people at all income levels.

In addition to their environmental benefits, electric vehicles are actually cheaper to own and operate and can save Oregonians hundreds of dollars per month. With the electric vehicle rebates approved in HB 2017, Oregonians can get the assistance they need with the upfront cost so they can benefit from the lower cost of ownership. The changes to the electric vehicle rebate program detailed in HB 4060 will only make the program better and easier to use.