



To: Members of the Joint Committee on Transportation
From: Rhett Lawrence, Pacific Northwest Policy Manager
Date: April 6, 2021
RE: Support for HB 2165 A

Co-Chairs McLain and Beyer and Members of the Committee:

My name is Rhett Lawrence and I am the Pacific Northwest Policy Manager for Forth. We are a nonprofit trade association that advocates for the advancement of electric, hydrogen, shared, smart, connected, and autonomous mobility. Forth has nearly 200 members, including auto manufacturers, electric vehicle charging suppliers, industry partners, utilities, local governments, and non-profit environmental organizations.

As you know, Oregon has ambitious greenhouse gas reduction goals, and we are already behind in meeting them. Given that the transportation sector is now our state's biggest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, it is critical that we take steps to get those transportation emissions headed down – and quickly. Dramatically increasing the use of zero-emission vehicles is one of the most significant steps we can take to reduce transportation emissions, as the Legislature recognized when it passed SB 1044 in 2019. Automakers also recognize the need to rapidly decarbonize our transportation system. As you have likely heard, General Motors announced earlier this year that it will go all-electric by 2035, and that 40% of its models will be EVs by the end of 2025.

Forth has been very supportive of policy proposals which would speed up our state's transition to greater EV adoption, including making our homes and workplaces more conducive to EV charging. It is clear that if we are to have widespread adoption of EVs in Oregon, we will also need to greatly expand the availability of places to charge them. As we move toward a future with EVs everywhere, we need to be building that grid infrastructure now.

Thankfully, electric utilities are already making those types of investments in EV infrastructure today, and the provisions in HB 2165 A will simply allow them to more easily spread the cost of those investments to their larger base of ratepayers. This ability will allow utilities to make the type of larger, system-wide investments our state needs to put us on the path to our electric vehicle future. The programs already in place from PGE and Pacific Power have been very promising, and now we need to be able to expand those projects out to a much greater scale, as HB 2165 A will allow us to do.

Forth is also excited to work alongside Governor Brown and our other allies to advance the elements of HB 2165 A that expand the Oregon Clean Vehicle Rebate Program. Forth played a significant role in creating the EV rebate program as part of the 2017 transportation package, and we believe this bill makes changes to the program that will allow it to better serve low-income Oregonians, rural communities, and communities of color. The bill's removal of the program's 2024 sunset addresses the continuing need for financial assistance to ensure that electric vehicles are available to more Oregonians, and simplifying the income criteria will spread the program's benefits even more broadly.

We are particularly excited that HB 2165 A increases the amount of the income-qualified Charge Ahead rebate from \$2,500 to \$5,000, as we believe that this change will help to dramatically expand the pool of Oregonians who can afford electric vehicles. Given that you can now buy a used Nissan Leaf for significantly less than \$10,000, increasing the Charge Ahead rebate for such a purchase to \$5,000 makes an EV a much more realistic option for many families. We believe that this substantial increase of the Charge Ahead rebate, coupled with the increased funding for community outreach that HB 2165 A allows, will go a long way toward ensuring that Oregon's Clean Vehicle Rebate Program is benefiting all Oregonians.

Particularly when viewed together, this expansion of the Charge Ahead rebate, the utility investments in charging infrastructure enabled by HB 2165 A, and the EV-capable building codes changes contemplated by HB 2180 represent a significant step forward in increasing the accessibility of electric vehicles in our state without increased state investment.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to provide this testimony today.

FORTH

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