

PGE Testimony on House Bill 2290 - Public Charging at State Parks

February 22, 2021

The transportation sector is electrifying now, and public charging is needed to serve EVs across Oregon. Global sales of electric vehicles (EV) accelerated in 2020, up more than a third despite overall car sales down at least 15 percent year over year during the coronavirus pandemic. As of October 2020, there are more than 31,400 light duty electric vehicles registered in Oregon, a number that has continued to grow through the pandemic. As the transition to electric vehicles continues, charging ports are needed at places where people are likely to travel, such as tourism sites or state parks or forests. PGE customers in Northwest Oregon are likely to utilize EV charging stations in other parts of the state when they travel, including at state parks.

The introduced HB 2290 would direct the Department of State Parks and Recreation to *develop and implement* a plan to install public EV chargers at state parks. While PGE supports this version, we recognize that this may require state resources that may not be available at this time. The -1 amendment requires the department only to *allow for* the installation and service of EV chargers. While the introduced bill is preferable, the -1 amendment will still memorialize in statute the importance of EV charging at state parks and will require the department to allow for installation, perhaps in partnership with third parties.

We also support Sections 3-4 of the bill, which ensure that the Public Utility Commission has clear authority to allow utility investments in infrastructure to support widespread deployment of EV charging. While the charger is the most visible equipment, serving the growing fleet of electric vehicles will require upgrades to the electric infrastructure upstream of the charger, including the customer's electrical equipment and the distribution system maintained by the utility. Proactively planning for and investing in infrastructure to serve EVs allows the utility to serve the load as efficiently and cost effectively as possible. Utility investments can also facilitate and incentivize grid connected charging, which can help balance power supply and integrate renewable power to further decarbonize the electric system. This language is also present in several other bills this session.

