

To achieve a clean transportation transition, California will need to build hundreds of thousands more chargers by 2030. However, the cost to permit chargers can vary wildly county by county, sometimes far above the actual cost to issue the permit. [This bill] is an important step towards preparing our electrical vehicle infrastructure for the needs of tomorrow. This measure will standardize the cost of permit fees for electric vehicle chargers making their development and installation more affordable for the public and more predictable for developers.

- 2) **Background.** The California Energy Commission (CEC) projects California will need one million chargers to support seven million light-duty electric vehicles in 2030 and two million chargers by 2035. Today there are approximately 91,000 publicly available charging stations throughout the state.

In 2019, GO-Biz published the first edition of its EV Charging Station Permitting Guidebook, which generally recommended, as best practices, local agencies determine complete and approve EV charging station applications within specified time frames. In response to the Guidebook's recommendations, AB 970 (McCarty), Chapter 710, Statutes of 2021, established specific time frames in which local agencies must complete and approve permits for EV charging stations.

AB 2427 (McCarty), Chapter 567, Statutes of 2024, expanded on AB 970 by requiring local agencies to: develop a permitting checklist that includes all information required to permit the installation of EV charging stations in the public right-of-way; identify all applicable fees and charges as part of the permitting process; and, identify criteria of the local agency to determine appropriate locations within the public right-of-way for installation of an EV charging station.

The Legislature has approved a series of bills limiting the fees a city or county may charge for solar energy systems, including SB 1222 (Leno), Chapter 614, Statutes of 2012, that limited permit fees for rooftop solar systems and contained a January 1, 2018, sunset date, and AB 1414 (Friedman), Chapter 849, Statutes of 2017, that reduced the maximum permit fees, applied the caps to a broader range of solar energy systems, and extended the sunset date to January 1, 2025, which was subsequently extended to January 1, 2034. The language in this bill is modeled largely after these laws governing permit fees for solar energy systems.

- 3) **Arguments in Support.** The Electric Vehicle Charging Association (EVCA), sponsor of this bill, asserts:

Meeting the state's climate and clean transportation goals will require deployment at a scale and pace that depends on removing every barrier to installation, including excessive permitting costs. Unfortunately, in some jurisdictions, EV charging station permit fees have increased tenfold in only two years, with no corresponding increase in the cost of permit review. These inconsistent fees drive up project costs, reducing the number of chargers that can be economically deployed. [This bill] addresses this problem by establishing a fair permit fee schedule for residential and commercial EV charging stations that caps fees to a reasonable cost of permit processing. The bill preserves appropriate

local flexibility: a jurisdiction may exceed the fee schedule if it makes a written finding of the permit's actual cost.

- 4) **Arguments in Opposition.** The League of California Cities, the California State Association of Counties, and the Rural County Representatives of California assert:

Local governments are already constitutionally required to ensure that permit fees do not exceed the reasonable cost of providing the service. [This bill] departs from this longstanding principle by establishing fee caps that are frequently below the actual cost of permit processing, plan review, and inspection.

By preventing full [cost] recovery, [this bill] effectively shifts the burden of permitting private development onto local taxpayers. Cities and counties would be forced to subsidize EV infrastructure permitting through their general funds, diverting limited resources away from essential public services such as police, fire protection, and parks. Moreover, smaller and rural jurisdictions, where permitting volumes are lower and per-project costs are higher, would be disproportionately impacted by the bill's one-size-fits-all fee caps.

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