
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Sabrina Cervantes, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

SB 1283 (Ashby) - Electric vehicle charging stations: installation: permits

Version: April 23, 2026

Urgency: No

Hearing Date: May 11, 2026

Policy Vote: L. GOV. 6 - 0, JUD. 12 - 0

Mandate: Yes

Consultant: Mark McKenzie

Bill Summary: SB 1283 would expand existing requirements for cities and counties to streamline permitting of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations to include supporting infrastructure related to an EV charging station, and would establish new remedies if local governments have not complied with streamlining requirements, as specified.

Fiscal Impact:

- The Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz) anticipates minor and absorbable costs to develop and publicly post a standardized form and template that permit applicants can use to submit specified information if a local agency has not adopted a streamlining ordinance. (General Fund)
- Unknown, potentially significant court cost pressures for new workload to adjudicate additional actions for the recovery of injunctive relief or declaratory relief, or for a writ of mandamus, and potentially for recovery of reasonable attorney's fees and costs as well as expert fees and costs (Trial Court Trust Fund, General Fund). The actual fiscal impact on the courts will depend on many unknown factors, including the number of cases filed and the factors unique to each case. (See Staff Comments)
- Unknown significant local costs to adopt amended ordinances and checklists related to the streamlined permitting of EV charging stations and related infrastructure by December 31, 2027, and to comply with expanded permit streamlining requirements. Local costs are not state-reimbursable because local agencies have general authority to charge and adjust planning and permitting fees to cover any administrative costs for permitting mandates. (local funds)

Background: Existing law, as enacted by AB 1236 (Chiu, 2015), requires cities and counties to administratively approve an application to install an EV charging station through the issuance of a building permit or similar nondiscretionary permit, and limits building officials' review to whether the station meets all health and safety requirements of local, state, and federal law. A local agency may only deny a permit application if it makes a written finding based upon substantial evidence that the proposed installation would have a specific, adverse impact on public health or safety, and there is no feasible method to mitigate or avoid that impact. Existing law requires local agencies, by a specified date, to adopt an ordinance that creates an expedited, streamlined permitting process for EV charging stations, and to adopt a checklist of all requirements that EV charging stations must meet to qualify for expedited review, as specified. An application that satisfies all of the checklist requirements is deemed complete.

Existing law, as enacted by AB 970 (McCarty, 2021), requires an application for installation of EV charging stations to be deemed complete if local officials do not identify deficiencies after five business days (for proposals to construct 1-25 stations at a single site) or 10 business days (for proposals to construct over 25 stations at a single site). An application is deemed approved 20 business days after an application was deemed complete (for proposals to construct 1-25 stations at a single site), or 40 business days after the application was deemed complete (for proposals to construct over 25 stations at a single site), if local officials have not acted on the application.

Not all cities and counties have adopted the expedited permitting requirements of AB 1236 and subsequent laws. GO-Biz has been tracking local agency compliance with the state's EV charger streamlining laws and found that 358 cities and counties in the state are fully streamlined, 77 are partially streamlined, and the remaining 105 cities and counties are not streamlined.

Proposed Law: SB 1283 would expand requirements for cities and counties to streamline permitting of EV charging stations. Specifically, this bill would:

- Expand the existing requirements for cities and counties to administratively approve a permit application to install EV charging stations to include related infrastructure, including canopies, onsite energy storage systems sized to support charging, and supporting infrastructure, as specified.
- Require a city or county to adopt any amendments to streamlining ordinances and checklists to implement the changes specified in this bill by December 31, 2027.
- Define “canopy” as an overhead covering structure with a clearance height of 17 feet or less, measured from ground level to the underside of the canopy, a canopy fascia width of 4 feet or less, and coverage area of 5,000 square feet or less.
- Specify that nothing in these provisions is construed to limit a local agency's ability to do either of the following for an EV charging station and any supporting infrastructure necessary for operation of the EV charging station:
 - Require plans or supporting documentation that are necessary to verify the EV charging station and supporting infrastructure meets all health and safety requirements of local, state, and federal law, as specified.
 - Conduct inspections or require the EV charging station and supporting infrastructure, as built, to comply with all health and safety requirements.
- Require an application to install an EV charging station to be deemed approved without requirements for notice or a public hearing.
- Require an application to install an EV charging station to contain specified information about the proposed project if a city or county has not adopted or amended an ordinance or checklist, as specified. This information includes the location, number of chargers, electrical specifications, site grade, any canopy area, any energy storage system, and documentation demonstrating compliance with all applicable health and safety requirements.
- Require a local government, no later than 30 days after an application has been deemed approved, to provide written notice to the applicant of the date the application was deemed approved and identify all permits and authorizations that have been granted.

- Require GO-Biz to adopt a standardized form that applicants for EV charging stations can use to satisfy specified requirements if a local agency has not adopted a streamlining ordinance.
- Require GO-Biz to develop and publicly post a template that applicants can use to document their application's compliance with specified requirements to be deemed complete, as specified.
- Authorize an applicant to bring an action for injunctive or declaratory relief, or for a writ of mandamus, in any court of competent jurisdiction, to enforce these permitting provisions.
- Authorize the court, in an action brought by an applicant or the Attorney General, to award the prevailing plaintiff reasonable attorney's fees and costs as well as expert fees and costs if the court finds that the local agency is not making a good faith effort to comply with the expedited, streamlined permitting process.

Related Legislation: AB 970 (McCarty), Chap. 710/2021, required an application for EV charging stations to be deemed complete if local officials do not identify deficiencies after five or 10 business days (depending on the number of chargers), and required an application to be deemed approved 20 or 40 business days after the application was deemed complete (for up to 25 stations at a single site, or more than 25 respectively).

AB 1236 (Chiu), Chap. 568/2015, required cities and counties to administratively approve an application to install an EV charging station, adopt an ordinance that creates an expedited and streamlined permitting process for EV charging stations, and adopt a checklist that EV charging stations must meet to qualify for expedited review.

Staff Comments: As noted above, this bill creates a new right of action for an applicant to seek injunctive or declaratory relief, or for a writ of mandamus, to enforce these statutory permit streamlining statutes. The bill also authorizes the court to award the prevailing plaintiff reasonable attorney's fees and costs, as well as expert fees and costs, if the court finds that a local agency is not making a good faith effort to comply with the requirements of these laws. The specific number of new actions that would be filed under the bill is unknown, but numerous local agencies are currently out of compliance with the requirement to establish streamlined permitting for EV charger installations. Staff notes that it generally costs about \$10,500 to operate a courtroom for one eight-hour day. If cases brought as a result of this bill take an additional 40 hours of court time in the aggregate in a given year, the cost pressures to the courts would surpass the Suspense File threshold. Although courts are not funded on the basis of workload, increased staff time and resources resulting from additional case filings may result in delayed court services and create a need for enhanced support from the General Fund to fund court operations. Staff notes that trial court operations have cumulatively received over \$1 billion from the General Fund over the last five Budget Acts to improve service levels. The Governor's Proposed 2026-27 Budget includes \$70 million in ongoing support from the General Fund to continue to backfill the fund imbalance in the Trial Court Trust Fund and help pay for trial court operations. The Proposed Budget includes total funding of \$5.3 billion (\$3.3 billion General Fund and \$2 billion other funds) in 2026-27 for the Judicial Branch, of which \$3 billion is provided to support trial court operations.