
Rep. Marvin Abney, Chair
House Finance Committee
RI House of Representatives

OPPOSITION to E.V. Registration Fee (H5076 Article 5, Section 3)

February 25, 2025

Dear Chair Abney and Members of the Committee,

I oppose the electric vehicle registration fee detailed in Gov. McKee's proposed FY 2026 budget (H5076 Article 5, Section 3).

I have driven an EV for over 10 years and I am feeling only slightly guilty that I am not contributing to the upkeep of our roadways and bridges. On the other hand I feel really good that I am doing my part to reduce green house gas and other harmful chemical and particulate pollutants. My conscience is clear but my lungs are not. Although internal combustion engine owners pay a road use tax through fuel purchase, those vehicles contribute GHG's and other noxious tailpipe emissions to the air we breathe.

To make this equitable, if EV's are assessed a registration fee, then the tax on gasoline and diesel needs to increase to cover the negative effects of tailpipe emissions. What a great way to incentivize EV adoption! That is what RI is supposed to be doing!

I will never buy another ICE vehicle, but there are other Rhode Islanders contemplating an EV purchase and will hesitate and cancel their transition to an EV due to this regressive fee. This proposed fee feels like a vindictive tax on people trying to do the right thing! How do we meet the goals of the Act on Climate with this heavy-handed approach?

Having said how I really feel, I will offer 2 more compromise solutions. My first suggestion is to apply the emissions testing portion of the state inspection fee to a road use fund. My second is a fee based on a vehicle's weight and vehicle miles traveled (VMT). This is how the gas tax works. Heavier vehicles coupled with more miles driven, means more gas and diesel tax collected. I can live with that.

Please oppose the EV registration fee as proposed. Thank you for reading my testimony.

Sincerely,
Joel Gates
Glocester, RI