

DOCKETED

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Urging Energy Commission to Require EV Signage as Condition of Grant

Please see attached

Additional submitted attachment is included below.

July 20, 2020

California Energy Commission
Dockets Office, MS-4
1516 Ninth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-5512
Submitted electronically

Subject: Comment on Docket # 17-EVI-01: Block Grant for EV Charger Incentive Projects

Dear Commissioners,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Block Grant for EV Charger Incentive Projects.

Coltura is a non-profit working to accelerate the transition from gasoline to cleaner alternatives. Our vision is a gasoline-free America by 2040. In California we are pursuing state and local policies focused on reducing gasoline consumption.

This is to urge the Energy Commission to require installation of EV charging highway exit signage as a condition to receive grants for fast chargers within 3 miles of the highway.

California is spending [billions](#) on EV rebates and a vast network of public charging stations. However, the state has thus far missed a critical step: installing highway exit signage to let **gas car drivers** know that EV charging is there.

The Big Misperception: No Place to Charge

According to recent polls, perceived lack of charging stations is the top barrier to EV adoption, with 61% of drivers in [one poll](#) and 62% in [another](#) stating that lack of charging was holding them back, and 41% of consumers [saying](#) roadside charging was a requirement for them to purchase an EV.

There is a big gap between perception of charging availability and reality. The state *already* has [1,017 public DC fast charging stations \(4,467 charging ports\)](#). However, they are hard to see, tucked away in shopping centers and restaurant parking lots. As a result, despite a doubling in the number of California public charging stations between 2014 and 2017, awareness of EV charging [didn't budge](#), and even today [most gas car drivers still have the impression](#) there are not enough charging stations.

In contrast, gasoline for sale is proclaimed in big letters all along California's roadways. Gas stations have giant signs stretching high into the sky, brightly lit canopies, and prominent highway exit signs. With so much roadway advertising for gasoline, and so little for EV charging, it is not surprising that 98% of California cars are still powered by gasoline.

One line of thinking suggests that there is no need for roadside EV charging signage – after all, EV drivers use smartphone apps to find roadside charging. This misses a key point. **Gas car drivers** do not have EV charging apps. They are the ones who need to see EV charging signs to have the confidence to switch to EVs.

The state must address this gap between perception and reality to reach its EV adoption goals.

Installing Highway Exit Signage: An Effective, Cheap Solution

Installing highway exit signs for every roadside EV charger is an effective way to improve EV charging awareness. A [2019 study](#) showed that 47% of those who recalled seeing EV charging signage or a charging station would consider getting an EV, vs 15% of those who did not. The signs are not expensive. According to Caltrans, they cost as little as \$25, and installation runs \$400 to \$3,900. This is a small expense compared to what California spends on installing fast chargers (\$90,000 to \$180,000 per charging station).

The Energy Commission Should Require Installation of Highway Signage and “Follow Up” Signage as a Condition of Receiving Incentive Grants for DC Fast Chargers

Under the [current system](#), Caltrans will pay for and install EV charging highway exit signs for any DC fast charger within 3 miles of the highway. As a pre-requisite, the local jurisdiction (city or county) must first install the “follow-up” signs for each turn from the highway exit to the charging station.

That system isn’t working – only about 5% of California’s fast chargers have any highway signage. The Energy Commission could address this going forward, by tying its grants for roadside DC Fast Chargers to a requirement that grant recipients work with local jurisdictions to install the follow up signage at turns between the highway and the charging station.

This would fulfill the necessary conditions for Caltrans to install EV charging highway exit signage. It would also ensure that more EV charging highway signage gets installed – a necessary step toward 5 million EVs on the road by 2030.

We appreciate the Energy Commission’s public comment process as an opportunity to highlight a simple step the Commission could take to increase EV charging highway exit signage and change perceptions of gas car drivers about the sufficiency of roadside fast charging. We look forward to your continued leadership.

Sincerely,

 /s/ Janelle London

Janelle London
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Thank you for your consideration of this comment.