

DOCKETED	
Docket Number:	22-EVI-03
Project Title:	National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Deployment Plan Development, 2022-26 for CEC and Caltrans
TN #:	243701
Document Title:	IBEW Local 1245 Comments - Request to Amend NEVI Program
Description:	N/A
Filer:	System
Organization:	IBEW Local 1245
Submitter Role:	Public
Submission Date:	6/24/2022 1:32:59 PM
Docketed Date:	6/24/2022

*Comment Received From: IBEW Local 1245
Submitted On: 6/24/2022
Docket Number: 22-EVI-03*

Request to Amend NEVI Program

Additional submitted attachment is included below.

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IBEW 1245

THE POWER IS IN OUR HANDS

BOB DEAN, BUSINESS MANAGER
CECELIA DE LA TORRE, PRESIDENT

June 24, 2022

Ms. Barbara Valentine
Zero-Emission Vehicle Hub Manager
Director's Office of Sustainability
California Department of Transportation

Re. Comments on California's Draft Deployment Plan for the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Program
CEC Docket #: 22-EVI-03

Dear Ms. Valentine:

I am writing on behalf of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers-Local 1245 to respectfully request the California Department of Transportation ("Caltrans") to amend the Draft "California's Deployment Plan for the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Program" ("Draft NEVI Program Deployment Plan" or "Plan"). The Draft NEVI Program Deployment Plan requires amendments because it fails to meet Federal Guidelines stating the plan should address training and experience requirements for the workers installing and maintaining electric vehicle ("EV") charging infrastructure and should ensure the workforce is trained by high quality training programs like the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Training Program ("EVITP").

The Draft Plan also contains inaccurate and unsupported information regarding the availability of EVITP-Certified electricians to meet the needs of the NEVI Program plan. Furthermore, the failure to require installation by EVITP-Certified electricians for projects funded by the federal NEVI Program is inconsistent with the requirements set by the California Legislature for similar major EV infrastructure programs funded through State Agencies. Requiring EVITP certification for EV infrastructure projects funded under the NEVI Program will both ensure this equipment is installed safely and efficiently by highly skilled and trained electricians, while at the same time supporting the continued development of the skilled workforce needed to ensure California meets its EV infrastructure goals.

EVITP is a nationally recognized training standard for Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment ("EVSE") installation, commissioning, and maintenance and an industry standard for the proper credentialing of EVSE electricians. The EVITP is a non-profit, brand neutral, industry collaborative organization which began in 2011 after a series of fires related to the charging of electric vehicles, some of which started in the electrical systems of the buildings where those cars were charging.¹ As of June, 2022, EVITP has certified approximately 2,300 EVITP-Certified electricians in California. EVITP is the only existing training and certification program of its kind, is very low cost, and is available online ensuring access to state-certified general electricians in all parts of the state.

EVITP trains electricians in the necessary technical requirements, safety imperatives, and performance integrity for the installation of EV equipment for charging stations and electric recharging points. The comprehensive EVITP curriculum trains and credentials electricians to perform a multitude of EVSE work. Notably, EVITP devotes considerable training and testing time to properly and accurately performing site assessments and load calculations which are essential to avoiding electrical fires, and to the responsible deployment and ongoing operation of EV

Id.

charging infrastructure. EVITP certification is currently the only available certification that ensures that EVSE and the associated EV charging infrastructure are installed safely and in accordance with the applicable codes and regulations, and that the electricity dispensed from charging stations is safely delivered.

The NEVI Formula Program is authorized by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and its purpose is to “provide funding to States to strategically deploy EV charging infrastructure and to establish an interconnected network to facilitate data collection, access, and reliability.” Under the Program, each state is required to submit a Plan that describes how the state intends to use its NEVI Formula Program funds. Federal Highway Administration (“FHWA”) Guidance on the Program requires each Plan to ensure that the workforce is trained by high quality training programs like the EVITP, and explains that “[s]trong labor, training, and installation standards will help produce a nationwide network of 500,000 EV chargers by 2030 that provides a convenient, reliable, affordable, and equitable charging experience for all users.”

Just recently, the FHWA has updated this guidance to explicitly require all projects funded under the NEVI Formula Program to ensure all electricians installing, maintaining, and operating EVSE are EVITP-certified or have graduated from a Registered Apprenticeship Program for electricians that includes EVSE-specific training and is developed as a part of a national guideline standard approved by the Department of Labor in consultation with the Department of Transportation.

The NEVI program guidance is consistent with similar requirements adopted by the California State legislature for EV charging infrastructure and equipment located on the customer side of the electric meter that is funded or authorized, in whole or in part, by the California Public Utilities Commission (“CPUC”), the California Energy Commission (“CEC”), or the State Air Resources Board (“CARB”). In 2020, the Governor signed into law AB 841, which requires EV charging infrastructure and equipment that is funded or authorized by the CPUC, CARB or the CEC to be installed by a crew that includes EVITP-Certified electricians. AB 841 requires at least 25% of the total electricians working on the crew for the project, at any given time, to be EVITP-Certified for projects with charging ports capable of supplying 25 kilowatts or more to a vehicle. For projects below that threshold, AB 841 requires at least one person on the crew, at any given time, to be EVITP-Certified.

Despite the clear FHWA guidance and the precedent set by AB 841, the Draft Plan does not require EVITP certification or any other workforce training for Caltrans’ projects funded by the NEVI program. While the Plan references the AB 841 requirements, Caltrans projects funded by the NEVI Program are not subject to AB 841 unless also funded or authorized by CPUC, CARB or the CEC. Merely mentioning AB 841 without adopting similar requirements for all projects funded under the NEVI-Program does not meet the FHWA guidance to ensure that the workforce is trained by high quality training programs like EVITP. The Draft Plan thus fails to demonstrate how it will implement “[s]trong labor, training, and installation standards” for the NEVI Program.

In failing to adopt an EVITP-certification requirement, the report incorrectly asserts that there may be workforce availability issues if EVITP is required – particularly in rural areas of the state. There is no evidence to support this statement. AB 841 has been in effect for over a year and a half with no issues of workforce availability. Many EVITP-Certified contractors are state-wide contractors that hire or request dispatch of local EVITP electricians wherever they are engaged on a job. The contractor pins on the EVITP map indicate the contractor’s office location, not their service territory. Moreover, since the adoption of AB 841, the number of EVITP-certified electricians has increased by more than 40% and continues to expand at a rapid pace. In addition to EVITP’s online training resources, EVITP is transitioning from in-person testing to online testing, ensuring that electricians in all parts of the state will have even easier access to certification. That transition is scheduled to be completed by the end of August (2022) - before Federal EV infrastructure funds are distributed. Concerns over EVITP certification availability in rural areas are misplaced.

Moreover, failing to adopt an EVITP requirement will create a disincentive for contractors in rural areas of the state to train their workers in EV equipment installation. It is only the adoption of mandatory requirements that will create the incentive for contractors to invest in EVITP training in areas of the state with lower EV-adoption rates. Adopting an EVITP-certification requirement for the NEVI program will spur more electricians in rural areas of the state to obtain

their EVTIP certification since they know money for these jobs is coming into their areas. This will not only ensure the safe and reliable installation of EV charging equipment and infrastructure funded under the NEVI Program, it will also ensure that a well-trained and motivated workforce will be in place in all parts of California to enable continued expansion of EV charging capabilities beyond what is provided under the NEVI Program.

Incorporating the same EVITP requirement that is contained in AB 841 will also make it easier for industry management and workers to comply. Having multiple EV infrastructure incentive programs with multiple different requirements is unnecessary, cumbersome and will create confusion. The AB 841 requirements have been implemented smoothly and are understood by contractors. The NEVI Program in California should follow this successful path.

Requiring EVITP-Certified electricians makes EVSE installations safer, provides for more efficient installation, reduces errors, and protects the integrity of the EV industry. We strongly urge amendment of the Draft NEVI Program Deployment Plan to require EVITP certification for projects funded under the NEVI Program, just as is already required for CPUC, CEC and CARB programs under AB 841. Such a requirement is not just good policy, it is necessary to meet FWHA guidelines.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bob Dean".

Bob Dean
Business Manager
IBEW Local 1245
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