

DOCKETED

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*Comment Received From: Samantha Ortega
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Comments of ChargerHelp on Draft Staff Report

Additional submitted attachment is included below.



ChargerHelp, Inc

October 25, 2023

Mr. Dustin Schell
Air Resources Engineer
California Energy Commission
715 P Street
Sacramento, California 95814

RE: Docket No. 22-EVI-04 - Comments on Draft Staff Report Tracking California's Electric Vehicle Chargers

Dear Mr. Schell,

ChargerHelp appreciates the opportunity to submit comments on the Draft Staff Report and proposed regulations related to EV charger reliability within the above-named docket. ChargerHelp supports the general scope of regulations proposed within the report, and believes they are critical components for ensuring electric vehicle charging meets the standards and expectations of California drivers. We suggest modifications to the reliability reporting mechanisms proposed to ensure these regulations better align with actual driver experience and the roles various companies play in monitoring and maintaining EV charging stations. We further encourage the CEC to include an uptime requirement in its final Report, in line with legislative requirements.

About ChargerHelp

ChargerHelp is a technology company committed to ensuring electric vehicle (EV) charging station reliability. Our technology and boots-on-the-ground programs enable the on-demand inspection, diagnostics, maintenance, and repair of EV charging stations, including both software and hardware. We are a women and minority-owned company that helps solve the industry-wide problem of downed and broken Level 2 and DC fast charging stations. ChargerHelp oversees 20,000 EV charging stations throughout the US. Through the ongoing partnership with workforce development agencies, safety centers, EV network providers, and EV charging hardware manufacturers, ChargerHelp is able to stand up a local workforce dedicated to operating and maintaining the different software and hardware technologies existing in the market today.

Final regulations should include an EV Charger Inventory

ChargerHelp supports the Draft Report's proposal to establish an EV charger inventory. Based on our review of the Alternative Fuels Data Center Electric Vehicle Charging Station Location database, we believe there are a significant number of stations currently unlisted. This aligns with CEC Staff's estimates that only about half of stations are listed. In order to establish a more accurate baseline for all program and planning efforts going forward, a more robust understanding of existing charging stations is needed. Furthermore, such a survey will improve Staff's ability to implement legislatively mandated reliability and uptime regulations. We recommend that CEC ensure that data collected through statewide efforts is aligned with AFDC database information.

Uptime reporting requirements should be modified to better reflect driver experience.

ChargerHelp strongly supports uptime reporting, and believes the draft CEC regulations are a step in the right direction. However, we believe that, as-written, they do not fully capture the realities drivers face at charging stations.

1. **Uptime should be measured at the connector level.** ChargerHelp believes measuring uptime at the connector level, rather than the port level, is important from a driver experience and equity perspective. Most drivers are dependent upon a specific connector type and if that connector type is not working at a station, the station is down for them and consequently they are discouraged from utilizing that site. This is frustrating for drivers who may have limited access to the connector type they need. Requiring that all connectors be operational for a charging station to be considered up also aligns with the uptime definition, included both in the draft report and in line with National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure program guidance that states that all software and hardware should function "as designed." If a station is allowed to be considered up when one of the connectors does not work, it will likely not be prioritized for maintenance, leading to poor customer experience over a longer period of time. Charging companies are capable of capturing port-level data, and should be required to do so under the regulations.
2. **Reporting via network monitoring alone will not capture certain hardware malfunctions.** ChargerHelp is concerned that, as written, the reporting regulations for networked chargers will fail to reveal critical hardware issues existing today. Many hardware issues will not trigger errors through OCPP monitoring alone. Broken screens, broken credit card readers, damaged connector pins, and other hardware malfunctions will not be captured. For this reason, we suggest that the CEC incorporate a more comprehensive set of monitoring and reporting requirements into uptime regulations. Site hosts and station operators should be encouraged, incentivized, or required to work with maintenance providers to regularly (e.g. quarterly) survey equipment to identify hardware failures that may not be recorded

through network monitoring. Charging station operators, or their designated maintenance providers, should also engage in regular monitoring of charging station utilization patterns in order to identify outages that may not trigger error codes.

- 3. Reporting agent for reliability regulation should be the charging network provider or a designee as determined by the station operator.** Given limitations to the quality and type of data collected through charging networks alone, we suggest that the CEC consider reporting frameworks site hosts and station operators should be encouraged to engage in a more comprehensive station monitoring with reporting flowing through a maintenance provider that offers services at both the hardware and software level. In doing so, the CEC can look to align definitions with those used by other California agencies. For example, the California Air Resources Board defines an Electric Vehicle Service Provider (EVSP) as the entity responsible for operating one or more networked or non-networked EVSE. Operating includes, but is not limited to, sending commands or messages to a networked EVSE; receiving commands or messages from a networked EVSE; or providing billing, maintenance, reservations, or other services to a non-networked or networked EVSE. An EVSP may designate another entity to act as the EVSP for regulatory purposes.
- 4. The CEC should define “publicly funded” to include any funding that is awarded by state or local agencies, in addition to ratepayer funds.** A broad definition of public funding should include federal funding distributed by state and local agencies. While the Draft Regulations propose to exclude NEVI-funded EV charging stations and other chargers that do not receive funds originating from the state or ratepayers. While some stations, such as those funded by NEVI, will be subject to federal uptime requirements, we believe it is in the state’s best interest to take a broad view of “publicly funded” and ensure chargers within the state are aligned in the criteria they must meet and the monitoring they are subject to. Failing to include chargers whose funds originate at the federal level but are administered through state agencies will create uneven driver experience and more fractured reporting regimes.

The CEC should swiftly develop minimum uptime requirements for publicly-funded chargers.

As the CEC noted at the October 9, 2023 workshop covering these issues, the agency is legislatively required to set minimum uptime requirements for certain chargers. ChargerHelp believes this is a critical step toward ensuring all stations in California operate reliably. Much of the timeline involved in setting uptime requirements involves parsing through the details of measuring uptime. The CEC has already begun this process through the issuance of draft regulations. For this reason, setting a minimum uptime standard should be relatively expedient. ChargerHelp suggests that final regulations include such a standard. We further suggest that the CEC consider stronger standards for chargers in disadvantaged communities, where drivers may be more likely to charge outside the

home. Failing to consider a requirement now could significantly delay an important and necessary regulatory action. While ChargerHelp understands that the CEC would like to consider additional data before setting such a standard, we believe there is sufficient data to show that uptime and reliability are problematic across the state. California must move quickly to improve the EV charging ecosystem to meet goals.

Conclusion

ChargerHelp appreciates the opportunity to comment on these issues. We look forward to working with stakeholders across California to support the state's ambitious transportation electrification goals.

Sincerely,

Samantha Ortega

Samantha Ortega
Manager, Government Relations