DOCKETED	
Docket Number:	22-EVI-04
Project Title:	Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Reliability
TN #:	261089
Document Title:	Request for Information - Electric Vehicle Charger Vandalism and Cable Theft
Description:	Responses Due February 17, 2025
Filer:	Spencer Kelley
Organization:	California Energy Commission
Submitter Role:	Commission Staff
Submission Date:	1/14/2025 1:53:40 PM
Docketed Date:	1/14/2025

CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION
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CEC-057 (Revised 1/21)

Request for Information

Electric Vehicle Charger Vandalism and Cable Theft

Responses Due February 17, 2025

Docket # 22-EVI-04

Purpose of Request:

As part of its efforts to improve the reliability of California's electric vehicle (EV) charging network, the California Energy Commission (CEC) is seeking to understand the impact of vandalism on charging reliability and convenience for EV motorists. The CEC seeks information from EV charging station operators and other interested organizations, stakeholders, and interested members of the public on the severity, extent, and frequency of vandalism events that render charging ports inoperable. The CEC is also seeking information on measures and practices that have proved effective at reducing vandalism. The goal of this request for information (RFI) is to identify and work to prevent or address factors, such as vandalism, that can reduce charger reliability and the public's confidence in a convenient, reliable, and safe charging network for their EVs.

Background:

Current media coverage suggests that vandalism may be a serious and widespread problem that creates doubt and frustration for EV drivers and significant expense for station owners and operators. However, little quantified information is available on this matter. The extent and severity of charger vandalism are not well understood at a systemwide level.

Charger hardware is susceptible to vandalism, accidental damage, and weather conditions. Theft-driven vandalism can especially impact cables.[1]Thieves cut them to collect very modest amounts of money from copper recyclers, while the cost to repair and prevent this damage is significantly higher. Heavier and stronger cables, which may better resist copper theft attempts, are more difficult to handle and more likely to be dropped and damaged by EV drivers, increasing the need for repairs. Depending on the cable management system, cables and connectors can experience vandalism or damage by being run over by vehicles. Display screens are vulnerable to vandalism as well as degradation from environmental factors such as sunlight, which can also make otherwise-functioning display screens difficult to read. Finally, power cabinet components such as switchgear are also targets of theft.

Request for Information:

The CEC is seeking public comments under this RFI to guide its ongoing work to enhance charger reliability in California. Responses to this RFI will be publicly available. This RFI seeks feedback on the following questions. Please respond to one or more of the questions below as applicable to you or your organization:

1. Please describe you or your organization's experience with charger vandalism and cable theft.
    a. Is vandalism a chronic issue for you or your organization, or more episodic?
    b. Do you or your organization view vandalism as a minor issue or a more serious issue that is affecting the reliability of your network and your drivers' charging experiences?
    c. If a chronic issue, is it widely and randomly distributed, or is it focused in particular geographic area(s)? If it occurs in specific geographic area(s), please describe the types of locations and the types of vandalism. Are there common characteristics (location, charger, type, and so forth) among chargers that are more frequently vandalized? Does the vandalism include theft of equipment to sell, such as charger cables and associated copper? Or is vandalism typified by malicious damage?
    d. What are the most frequent targets of vandalism? Cables, connectors, power cabinets, or other components?
    e. Do you systematically track vandalism incidents as part of your maintenance and operations? If so, do you maintain data on the frequency, distribution, and severity of such incidents? Is your organization willing to share this data with the CEC publicly or privately?

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[1]For example, see Malone Wade. May 16, 2024. "Electric Car Charger Vandalism Continues To Surge Nationwide," *Inside EVs,* https://insideevs.com/news/719834/tesla-supercharger-copper-cables-vandalized/, KFSN (ABC30 News). March 19, 2024. "Over 50 EV Charging Stations Vandalized Across Fresno," https://abc30.com/electric-vehicle-charging-stations-property-vandalized-custom-cabinets/14542407/, and Blink Mobility. "Cutting the Cord: The Shocking Reality of EV Charger Vandalism," https://blinkmobility.com/cutting-the-cord-the-shocking-reality-of-ev-charger-vandalism-for-copper/.

f. What is the average time to repair vandalized chargers?
g. On a **percentage basis**, what portion of your network has been unavailable to drivers due to vandalism over the past 12 months? Please specify your calculation basis, for example, in terms of the number of ports or sites, and specify your definition of "available." Are there regions of the state where these percentages are greater and the problem more acute?
h. How many charging ports (number rather than percentage) in your network have been unavailable to drivers due to vandalism over the past 12 months? Are there regions of the state where the quantity is greater and the problem more acute?
i. What are the financial impacts to your organization's network from vandalism? How much does it cost to repair and replace vandalized equipment, such as cables that have been cut and stolen for their copper? Please delineate the costs between AC and DC chargers.
j. Please describe any approaches you have used to mitigate vandalism.

2. How do you recommend the CEC support the prevention and remediation of EV charger cable theft and vandalism?
    a. Are there site designs or security measures that you have found to be effective?
    b. Are there equipment modifications or re-designs that you have found to be effective? For example, are aluminum conductors a plausible option?
    c. Are there best practices you would recommend?
    d. Are there security measures, design considerations, or best practices you would recommend that the CEC could require for publicly funded chargers?
    e. Please provide any other comments, data, information, or recommendations for CEC that would help address this issue.

3. Please identify key partners and working groups engaged in addressing and solving charger vandalism and cable theft.
    a. Do you or your organization work with local law enforcement? If so, has this proven effective at reducing or eliminating vandalism events?
    b. Are you aware of any public or private organizations conducting systematic investigations on the frequency, severity, and distribution of EV charger vandalism? If so, please identify any such studies.

How to Provide Information:

Comments must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. on **Monday, February 17, 2025**.

The CEC encourages the use of its electronic commenting system. Visit the e-commenting page for this docket at https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/Ecomment/Ecomment.aspx?docketnumber=22-EVI-04. Enter your contact information and a subject title that describes your comment (for example, "Response to RFI on EV Charger Vandalism and Cable Theft"). Comments

may be included in the “Comment Text” box or attached as a downloadable, searchable document in Microsoft® Word or Adobe® Acrobat®. The maximum file size allowed is 10 MB. For further information, see the CEC’s e-filing and e-commenting guidance page at https://www.energy.ca.gov/proceedings/e-filing-and-e-commenting.

Respondents to this RFI should not include any proprietary or confidential information. Written comments, attachments, and associated contact information (including address, phone number, and email address) will become part of the viewable public record of this proceeding with access available via any internet search engine.

Interested parties are encouraged to use the electronic filing system described above to submit information. If you are unable to submit electronically, a paper copy of your information may be sent to:

California Energy Commission
Docket Unit, MS 4
Re: Docket No. 22-EVI-04
715 P Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-5512

Written comments may also be submitted by email. Include “22-EVI-04: Response to RFI on EV Charger Vandalism and Cable Theft” in the subject line and email your response to docket@energy.ca.gov.

For information, please contact Jim McKinney and Kiel Pratt at ftd@energy.ca.gov.

The RFI is embedded in its entirety in this notice and is available on the CEC website at the 22-EVI-04 docket log.

News media inquiries can be directed to the Media and Public Communications Office at (916) 654-4989 or at mediaoffice@energy.ca.gov.

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Subscription Lists: Clean Transportation Program, Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Reliability Reporting and Performance Standards, Implementation of AB 2127 Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Assessments (AB 2127), National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Formula Program