

Transportation Committee HOUSE FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-6485

AN ACT CONCERNING THE CONNECTICUT HYDROGEN AND ELECTRIC

Title: AUTOMOBILE PURCHASE REBATE.

Vote Date: 3/10/2021

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/3/2021

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

REPRESENTATIVE MICHEL, 146TH DIST.

REASONS FOR BILL:

To study ways to ensure the equitable distribution of rebates under the Connecticut hydrogen and electric automobile purchase rebate program.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Katie S. Dykes, Commissioner of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection \(DEEP\)](#)

Katie S. Dykes provided written testimony in opposition to this bill. "[The] DEEP supports the equitable distribution of rebates under the CHEAPR program but does not believe that a study is necessary to achieve that goal." The Department details a forthcoming incentive program which is set to be implemented in the spring of 2021. In place of the study, the department recommends they "provide a summary on the distribution of CHEAPR incentives at least one year after the launch of the new CHEAPR incentive program."

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[Jeff Aiosa, Legislative Co-Chair of the Connecticut Automotive Retailers Association \(CARA\)](#)

Jeff Aiosa presented and submitted testimony in support of the bill. Mr. Aiosa explains that CARA assisted the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) in the creation of the CHEAPR program, and has been subsequently partnered with CHEAPR since its inception. He then as follows: "House Bill 6485 requires the CHEAPR board to analyze ways to ensure the equitable distribution of grants to residents buying electric vehicles in

Connecticut. This is so important because the only way we will see more electric cars on the road is to make sure these cars are available to a broader market."

Ruth Canovi, Director of Advocacy for the American Lung Association

Ruth Canovi submitted written testimony in support of this bill. Ruth offers a brief biography of the American Lung Association before summarizing their mission. She then emphasizes the Association's concern with air quality—ozone and particle pollution, in specific—stating as follows: "The transportation sector in Connecticut contributes to a significant share of these pollutants as well as greenhouse gas emissions that drive our climate crisis. We simply cannot ensure clean air and a livable climate for all Americans without addressing transportation. [...] We strongly support the intent of the CHEAPR program as the Lung Association supports measures to reduce the air pollution burdens caused by cars, trucks, and other mobile sources, which can take a disproportionate toll on lower-income communities and communities of color."

Chris D'Antonio, Resident of Enfield

Chris D'Antonio submitted written testimony in support of this bill, referencing it as "a good start" before offering three suggestions for improvements, which are summarized as follows: **1.** CHEAPR should appoint multiple BIPOC members; **2.** the bill should define e-bikes, e-mopeds, and e-motorcycles as vehicles under state law; **3.** the DEEP and CHEAPR should be required to run a pilot project for e-bike and/or e-moped incentives for moderate income households.

Gene DeJoannis, Resident of Connecticut

Gene DeJoannis submitted written testimony in support of this bill. Their testimony is identical to Chris D'Antonio's (seen above), with the exception of the penultimate paragraph, in which they state as follows: "We need local transit solutions for in-town mobility with no carbon emissions. Two-wheel electric vehicles are an ideal solution for the last mile of commuter trips and for in-town trips for many of our residents. We should do all we can to promote these transit options."

Royal Graves, Resident of Wethersfield

Royal Graves submitted written testimony in support of this bill. Their testimony is identical to Chris D'Antonio's (seen above).

Sharon Huttner, Member of the Branford Clean Energy Ad Hoc Committee

Sharon Huttner submitted written testimony in support of this bill, with an offered amendment. She expresses both her concern for the environment and interest in sustainable modes of transportation, then describes the current EV rebate as structurally inequitable. As a solution for this lack of equity, Sharon Huttner suggests the extension of EV rebates to include e-bikes, outlining a potential approach in detail.

Sharon Huttner, Resident of Branford

Sharon Huttner submitted a second written testimony in support of this bill. The testimony is identical to both Chris D'Antonio's and Royal Graves (seen above).

[Amy McLean, Connecticut Director and Senior Policy Advocate of the Acadia Center](#)

Amy McLean, presented and submitted written testimony in support of the bill on behalf of the Acadia Center. The Acadia Center is a member of the CHEAPR board—and is of the belief that, in order to ensure the success and adequate progression of new funding levels, said funding must be both monitored and studied. The testimony states that "tracking the performance or lack thereof is the only way that the program can be moved into a successful future."

[Beverly Propen, Resident of Orange](#)

Beverly Propen submitted testimony in support of this bill. The testimony is identical to Chris D'Antonio's, Royal Graves, and Sharon Huttner's (seen above).

[Barry Rahmy, Resident of Weatogue](#)

Barry Rahmy submitted testimony in support of this bill. The testimony is identical to Chris D'Antonio's, Royal Graves', Sharon Huttner's, and Beverly Propen's (seen above).

[Charles J. Rothenberger, Climate and Energy Attorney for Save the Sound \(Non-profit Organization\)](#)

Charles J. Rothenberger presented and submitted written testimony on behalf of Save the Sound, in which the organization proposed an amendment. The testimony notes that CHEAPR "failed to restore the base incentive rebates levels to their pre-2019 levels." They then offer several recommendations, which are summarized as follows: **1.** Greenhouse Gas Fees established in section 22a201c of the General Statutes be fully dedicated to the state's CHEAPR electric vehicle incentive rebate program; **2.** the scope of the proposed study be expanded to include an examination of what level of funding would be required to place Connecticut on track to reach its goals; **3.** E-bikes not be considered for inclusion within the CHEAPR program in the future unless they are to meaningfully advance the state's climate goals. Explanation and possibilities for implementation of said proposals are outlined in detail.

[Kate Rozen, Resident of Woodbridge](#)

Kate Rozen presented and submitted testimony in support of this bill, in which she proposes that e-bikes, e-mopeds, and e-motorcycles be clearly defined by the law, and that the CHEAPR board establish a pilot program offering incentives for e-bikes and e-mopeds.

[Samantha Dynowski, State Director of the Sierra Club](#)

Samantha Dynowski submitted written testimony in support of this bill on behalf of the Sierra Club. The testimony states that the "Sierra Club is pleased with the emphasis that the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection is placing on equity in clean transportation programs including the CHEAPR program..." and that they support such efforts as well as the bill. They also urged that "Greenhouse Gas fees collected be fully dedicated to the program" on account of CHEAPR's insufficient funding and consequent struggle to maintain an effective program.

[Chris Schweitzer, Resident of New Haven](#)

Chris Schweitzer submitted testimony in support of this bill. The testimony is identical to Chris D'Antonio's, Royal Graves', Sharon Huttner's, Beverly Propen's, and Barry Rahmy's (seen above).

Melinda Tuhus, Resident of Hamden

Melinda Tuhus submitted written testimony in support of this bill, in which she expresses her support for providing rebates for e-bikes, e-mopeds, and e-motorcycles.

Zoemma Warshafsky, Resident of Middletown

Zoemma Warshafsky presented and submitted testimony in support of this bill. The written testimony is identical to Chris D'Antonio's, Royal Graves', Sharon Huttner's, Beverly Propen's, Barry Rahmy's, and Chris Sweitzer's (seen above).

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None Expressed, with the exception of **Katie S. Dykes, Commissioner of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP)**, which is listed under "RESPONSE OF ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY".

Reported by: Ian Bond

Date: 3/15/2021