

## NEW ELECTRIC-VEHICLE COALITION WRITING MAP TO GET EVS ON ROAD IN NJ

TOM JOHNSON | NOVEMBER 3, 2016

ChargEVC hopes to tackle the tough questions, like how a statewide vehicle-charging system will affect the power grid



With a wave of new electric vehicle models soon to be rolled out by auto manufacturers, a broad-based coalition is forming to help guide the state with policies on how to replace gasoline-fueled cars with their electric counterparts.

The transformation of the transportation sector – the largest source of greenhouse-gas emissions – is widely viewed as critical to New Jersey’s efforts to improve its air quality, enhance the emerging green economy, and comply with mandates to sell

zero-emission vehicles and curb climate-warming pollution.

For that to happen, many complex issues have yet to be worked out, in part due to state inaction. There is no consensus on how and where the electric charging systems should be built. More research is needed on how an influx of electric vehicles will affect the stability of the power grid and the cost of electricity, not only to plug-in car owners, but also for ratepayers in general.

The electric vehicle coalition hopes to begin providing some of those answers early next year when it plans to publish its first report, “The NJ EV Roadmap.” The study is designed as a blueprint for the policies necessary to ensure the acceleration of EV charging and infrastructure in the state.

The coalition, known as ChargEVC, comprises two companies installing plug-in charging stations, three of the four electric utilities in the state, a car dealer trade group, environmentalists, and community advocates.

“We see wide and large **economic and environmental benefits** across all sectors,” said Pamela Frank, executive director of the coalition, and a vice president of Gabel Associates, a prominent energy consulting firm in the state. “This is both an energy and transportation initiative.”

“There’s a lot of work that needs to be done,” said Chuck Feinberg, president of New Jersey Clean Cities Coalition, an organization that has promoted alternative vehicles for the past few years and a coalition member. “It has to be appropriately planned; it can’t happen by chance.”

For instance, the advent of electric cars will have implications for the power grid that will have to be addressed, he said. Those consequences could affect the energy sector, increasing the frequency so-called peaker power plants (ones that run only at times of peak demand) operate. By running more frequently, the peakers might become cheaper to operate, driving electricity costs lower.’

The challenge, too, is to ensure the benefits of electric vehicles reach all income levels. To date, the perception was that a person had to be fairly well off to own an electric vehicle, but Feinberg

noted cost is dropping with the new wave of electric vehicles coming on the market, expanding availability.

“With no tailpipe emissions and low operating costs, EVs can reduce air pollution and save money,” said Marty Johnson, president of Isles, Inc., and another coalition member. “Our job will be to evenly distribute those benefits – especially where they are most needed in urban neighborhoods.”

The conventional wisdom is that most charging will occur either at home or at work, but even so, the state needs to expand beyond the current number of approximately 400 public charging stations. “We feel there will be a significant need for public charging stations,” said Scott Fisher, director of market development for EVgo, a Princeton company that installs fast-charging stations.

In the end, the coalition will try to answer questions that the state had once thought a legislative commission would answer, but never made their way into law. Gov. Chris Christie conditionally vetoed a bill setting up a commission to deal with electric vehicles.

“We need a full-scale plan for an electric car infrastructure, but we couldn’t get it from the Christie administration,” said Doug O’Malley, director of Environment New Jersey and a member of the commission.