

PLUGGING AWAY AT CLIMATE CHANGE WITH ELECTRIC VEHICLES, CHARGERS

TOM JOHNSON | MARCH 6, 2018

Most of New Jersey's greenhouse-gas emissions come from the transportation sector, but getting more EVs on the road means deploying more charging stations



The state's transportation sector is the state's biggest contributor to greenhouse-gas pollution, but getting more EVs on the road means deploying more charging stations

With the goal of cleaning up the transportation sector, lawmakers yesterday approved a pair of bills that establish aggressive targets for getting more plug-in electric vehicles on the road in New Jersey.

The legislation is geared to curbing greenhouse-gas emissions from light-duty vehicles, the biggest single contributor in New Jersey to pollution that leads to climate change.

One of the bills (S-1795) advanced by the Senate Environment and Energy Committee would set ambitious goals for getting drivers in the state into electric vehicles — targets that would bring New Jersey into compliance with a **multistate program** to switch to so-called zero-emission vehicles.

Getting EV on the road

By 2025, the state needs to have 330,000 electric vehicles on the road, according to the bill. It also is one way to comply with California's zero-emission-vehicle program, which New Jersey and other states have committed to follow. "That will get us to where we need to be," said Pam Frank, the CEO of ChargeVC, a coalition trying to promote electric vehicles in the state.

Ten years later, the goal in the bill is to have 2 million plug-ins on the road, which would put New Jersey on target to achieve its goal of reducing emissions contributing to global warming by 80 percent by 2050.

"It's go time on EVs," Frank said. "It's the single most impactful action we can take to reduce carbon dioxide emissions." Those emissions from vehicles account for roughly 35 percent of the state's greenhouse-gas pollution.

"This legislation is part of a comprehensive set of initiatives to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions in the transportation sector," said Sen. Bob Smith, the chairman of the committee and a sponsor of the bill.

Playing catchup

New Jersey now has roughly 14,000 plug-in vehicles on the road. By most accounts, it is well behind other states in building the infrastructure needed to overcome the biggest barrier to consumers switching to electric vehicles — range anxiety, or the fear their car will run out of power before they can find a place to recharge the battery.

By 2040, at least 90 percent of all new vehicles sold in the state should be plug-in electric vehicles, [according to the legislation](#).

In addition, the bill establishes ambitious goals – some argue way too aggressive – for building out the electric charging-infrastructure in New Jersey.

By the end of 2020, at least 600 fast chargers, which can provide an 80 percent charge in as little as 15 minutes, would be available for public use at 300 locations in the state, according to the bill. By the same timeframe, another 500 Level 2 chargers, which take about three to five hours to charge, should be installed for public use.

David Schatz, developer of public policy for Chargepoint, the nation's largest installer of charging infrastructure, questioned whether those goals could be met. "There needs to be more consideration before we oversaturate the market," he said.

Schatz argued the timeframes established by the bill go way too far in determining the competitive market for charging infrastructure, which has been largely driven by private investment.

The committee also approved another bill ([S-606](#)) that would encourage municipalities to plan for the development of charging infrastructure at appropriate locations. Both bills now move on to the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee for further consideration.

