

**JEFFERSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

AGENDA REQUEST

TO: Board of Commissioners
FROM: Chris Goy, Central Services Director
DATE: May 8, 2023
RE: Letter of Support – U.S. Department of Transportation Electric Vehicle Charging Stations Funding Opportunity

STATEMENT OF ISSUE: The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) is conducting an open competitive grant solicitation for the installation of direct-current fast charging stations for electric vehicles (DC fast chargers) at publicly-accessible sites across the nation as part of a new initiative entitled the Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Discretionary Grant Program (CFI). Governmental entities are required to apply alongside a private sector partner. Energy Northwest, in their capacity as a grant aggregator, is collecting letters of support from potential site hosts along their proposed network of DC fast chargers along U.S. Highway 101 and across the Olympic Peninsula. Sites are still being determined in several locations and they are actively engaging with Jefferson County to identify the most ideal locations for this particular funding opportunity.

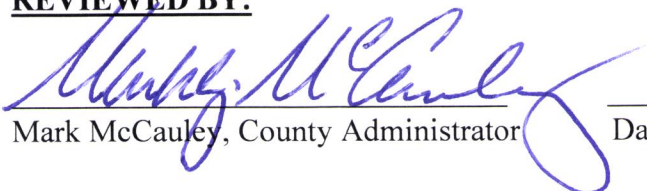
ANALYSIS: In order to proceed with obtaining assistance from the grant aggregator in their application for the USDOT CFI grant funding to install and maintain a network of DC fast chargers along U.S. Highway 101 and across the Olympic Peninsula, Energy Northwest has requested a letter of general support from the Jefferson County Board of Commissioners for prospective sites that may fall within Jefferson County borders. The attached letter of support is a non-binding demonstration of Jefferson County's ongoing commitment to a clean energy future.

Electric Vehicle Charging Stations (EVCS) is Energy Northwest's recommended private partner. Currently operating over 170 electric vehicle charging stations nationwide, 252 DC fast chargers, and dozens of locations in the Pacific Northwest, EVCS would be a highly-reputable private sector partner. EVCS, Energy Northwest, and the USDOT CFI grant funding, if awarded, would provide a unique model which would coordinate all grant application functions and require no financial support from Jefferson County, or other site hosts, for costs related to installation or maintenance of the fast-charging electric vehicle charging station equipment for the length of the agreement.

FISCAL IMPACT: Zero dollars (\$0.00) in installation or maintenance costs incurred by Jefferson County for the length of the agreement, the terms of which are negotiable following the grant being awarded to County-owned sites. Additionally, if signed by the Board of Commissioners, an operating agreement with EVCS and Energy Northwest may provide Jefferson County with a small revenue stream per kilowatt-hour from all installed DC fast chargers.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Board of Commissioners sign the attached letter of support. This letter of intent is non-binding and the Board retains the right to not proceed with an agreement at a later date. The Board also retains the right to withhold support of a specific proposed site.

REVIEWED BY:

 5/4/23
Mark McCauley, County Administrator Date

LETTER OF SUPPORT

May 8, 2023
Tanya Dion
Project Developer
Energy Northwest
PO Box 968, MD-1035
Richland, WA 99354

Dear Energy Northwest,

We are writing in support of Energy Northwest's efforts to electrify the U.S. Highway 101 and the broader Olympic Peninsula through the installation of direct-current fast charging stations for electric vehicles (DC fast chargers). As the market share of electric vehicles increases, we see a good value in providing this charging amenity for our customers, tenants and visitors. This initiative would also help close significant gaps in electric vehicle (EV) charging coverage which exist along U.S. Highway 101 and across the Olympic Peninsula.

U.S. Highway 101 has been identified by the Washington State Department of Transportation as a high priority for the installation of EV charging stations due to its limited options. With the rate of plug-in electric vehicle registrations in Washington quickly increasing, this initiative is crucial in supporting a clean energy future across the state.

Increasing the number of DC fast chargers is also consistent with recent modeling done by the joint Port Townsend/Jefferson County Climate Action Committee, which identified a fast transition to electric vehicles as a top opportunity for reducing our community wide emissions, as seen in the 2020 Greenhouse Gas Community Emissions Reduction Opportunities report. With transportation accounting for 66% of Jefferson County's community-wide greenhouse gas emissions, as identified in the Jefferson County Washington's 2018 Inventory of Greenhouse Gases, the DC fast chargers being proposed by Energy Northwest, in partnership with Electric Vehicle Charging Stations (EVCS), will help our community address this extremely important issue in a manner that is practical for daily life.

Jefferson County is also a rural area, with an average annual wage below the state average. Rural drivers generally drive more miles and have fewer transportation options, resulting in disproportionately higher transportation costs for low-and-moderate income households in our community. Beyond reducing our collective greenhouse gas emissions, we remain dedicated to making Jefferson County an affordable, high-quality place to live for all residents.

We support the efforts of Energy Northwest to install a network of direct-current fast charging stations for electric vehicles throughout the Olympic Peninsula and stand ready to participate in thoughtful site selection wherever our assistance could be useful.