

# Notice of Request for Information (RFI)

## Electric Charging and Alternative Fuel Vehicle Programs

October 2022

During the 2022 legislative session, Governor Jay Inslee and the Washington State Legislature created two new clean transportation programs through the state’s fiscal year 2023 operating budget. The Washington State Department of Commerce (Commerce) will administer both programs and requests information and ideas from the public to help develop program design.

Program	Summary
<p><b>\$69 million</b> for electric vehicle charging infrastructure</p> <p><i>ESSB 5693, Sec. 128, Proviso 226, general fund (state)</i></p>	<p>Funding is intended for electric vehicle charging infrastructure in rural areas, office buildings, multifamily housing, ports, schools and school districts, and state and local government offices.</p> <p>Grant funding must be used for level 2 or higher charging infrastructure – with a preference for level 3 or higher – and must be implemented by local governments, federally recognized tribal governments, or electric utilities.</p> <p>Level 2 requires 240 volts, which is available in most homes. Level 3 requires additional voltage and supports DC fast charging. More information is available from the <a href="#">U.S. Department of Energy</a>.</p>
<p><b>\$25 million</b> for alternative fuel vehicle incentives</p> <p><i>ESSB 5693, Sec. 128, Proviso 198, electric vehicle incentive account (state)</i></p>	<p>Funding is intended for programs or incentives that promote the purchase of alternative fuel vehicles.</p> <p>Commerce must prioritize:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individuals living in overburdened communities</li> <li>• Individuals with greatest need of assistance</li> <li>• Communities of color, communities with the greatest health disparities, and low-income communities</li> </ul>

### Submission process

The request for your input contains three parts: **Part A** covers respondent information and public engagement preferences. **Part B** covers the electric vehicle charging infrastructure program. **Part C** covers the alternative fuel vehicle incentives program. Part A is required for all submissions. Respondents can submit answers to either or both of parts B and C.

Individuals and organizations may submit responses that address questions one at a time or through one overall response that answers questions throughout (for example, submitting a proposed program design that includes answers to the Request for Information questions). You may also submit general comments by emailing [CleanTransportation@commerce.wa.gov](mailto:CleanTransportation@commerce.wa.gov) or through the mail to the address below.

### Submit responses

- In writing to the following email address: [CleanTransportation@commerce.wa.gov](mailto:CleanTransportation@commerce.wa.gov). Please use “Program Design Information for Electric Charging and Alternative Fuel Vehicle Programs” as your subject line.
- By completing our [online survey](#).
- By completing this document as a PDF form, saving it, and returning it via print or email.
- By mailing your response to:  
Steven Hershkowitz  
Washington State Department of Commerce  
1011 Plum Street SE  
P.O. Box 42525  
Olympia, WA 98504-2525

All participation is welcome, including non-written communication. Interested individuals and organizations can request alternative submission methods (audio recording, video response, meeting with program team, etc.) and Commerce will accommodate requests if staff time is available. Commerce will prioritize requests that affect accessibility or equity. Please make these requests to the Commerce contact listed below.

Commerce may reach out to individuals or organizations to ask follow-up questions in response to submissions. Participation in this RFI does not affect any program award outcomes and is not required to be considered for future funding.

### Commerce contact

Please direct questions to our Clean Transportation team in Commerce’s Energy Division at [CleanTransportation@commerce.wa.gov](mailto:CleanTransportation@commerce.wa.gov).

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## Introduction

### Commerce program objectives

Commerce plans to design both programs to maximize positive outcomes for the following objectives:

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Reduce environmental health disparities caused by transportation-related pollutants
- Reduce income-based disparities in access to electric vehicles and electric vehicle charging infrastructure
- Reduce geographic disparities in access to electric vehicles and electric vehicle charging infrastructure
- Improve the state’s energy resilience and security

Commerce will ensure these outcomes by considering a wide variety of direct and indirect effects, not limited to monetized or intergenerational impacts.

### Committed to environmental justice

Commerce is working to address environmental justice through multiple pathways – including the 2021 Healthy Environment for All Act – and has, at a minimum, goals to:

- Address harms caused by policies and practices that led to environmental health disparities in communities, and improve the health of all people in Washington
- Prevent and address environmental health disparities in environmental programs and funding
- Reduce exposure to environmental hazards within tribal lands
- Track and measure the accomplishments of our environmental justice implementation

In addition, through this RFI, Commerce seeks to create an equitable, community-engaged process that produces environmentally just outcomes for the program. This may include:

- Following community engagement best practices that allow for meaningful and equitable participation in Commerce decision making
- Assessing the program design, once drafted, to identify opportunities to minimize environmental harm and equitably distribute benefits
- Incorporating environmental justice principles into our funding decision process
- Identifying potential impacts to tribal lands, rights and resources, and seeking respectful consultation with tribes where appropriate.

### **Background on previous Commerce community engagement activities for electric vehicle charging infrastructure programs**

In 2020, Commerce began funding electric vehicle charging infrastructure and the electric grid modernization needed to power that infrastructure through the Clean Energy Fund Electrification of Transportation Systems (ETS) program. ETS awarded \$9.8 million to 14 projects across the state in its first round of grants and is now working on awarding another \$3 million in its current round.

In 2019-20, Commerce received significant input on ETS through written comments and public meetings. A few general themes included:

- Any operation and maintenance requirement must be based on common lifespan of electric vehicle supply equipment and be consistent with other electric vehicle charging programs in Washington and across the country.
- Commerce should ensure any match requirements are inclusive and do not block projects from communities that already lack access to electric vehicle charging infrastructure.
- Commerce should include strong community engagement requirements that demonstrate community demand for the project, include culturally relevant materials in target languages, and provide relevant information on transportation electrification.
- Commerce should expand the program's equity prioritization to include more specific environmental, geographic, economic and other intersecting equity considerations.

### **Additionally, Commerce made many technical adjustments to ETS program criteria based on feedback to a draft Request for Applications before issuing a finalized version.**

During our initial outreach efforts for current ETS funding opportunities – including one-on-one meetings, a survey and three listening sessions with eligible implementers – we heard a few general themes:

- Utilities and local and tribal governments want more opportunities to talk with both subject matter experts and each other to increase technical planning abilities and form partnerships. There is strong demand for accepting partnership applications.

- Many eligible implementers expressed interest in whether there is a way to package together proposals or use technical work done by one applicant and apply it to their projects instead of individually developing proposals from scratch. Sample applications, templates, guides and other examples of successful applications would also be helpful.
- There is a desire to replicate and expand the strategy of pairing electric vehicle charging infrastructure with on-site solar power.
- There is interest in making program funding available for public outreach and education so residents know about charging sites and become more familiar with the technology.
- Eligible implementers said that it takes too long to execute the contract once an award is made, and hope for simplifications to that process.
- Eligible implementers requested that Commerce use grant funding to provide financial resources for existing state-level transportation electrification and other climate plans, rather than asking for changes to existing utility, local and tribal government plans in order to qualify for funding.

## Part A: Respondent Information and Public Engagement Preferences

This document is a fillable form. You can fill it in, save it and submit it as a PDF, or use this [SurveyMonkey link](#).

### Respondent information

**\*\*Commerce will post responses online to make our process as transparent as possible.\*\***

Name	
Organization(s) you are representing (if applicable)	
Title (if applicable)	
County	
City	
ZIP code	
E-mail	
Phone number (optional)	

### Public engagement preferences

1. Which public engagement activities would you like to participate in to continue giving input on for program design? Commerce will use responses to plan future community conversations and engagement. Options include but are not limited to:

<input type="checkbox"/>	a. Virtual listening sessions
<input type="checkbox"/>	b. In-person regional listening sessions
<input type="checkbox"/>	c. In-person focus groups
<input type="checkbox"/>	d. Online surveys
<input type="checkbox"/>	e. Webinars
<input type="checkbox"/>	f. Direct meetings with organizations and associations
<input type="checkbox"/>	g. Updates at planned community events

	h. Comment opportunities on proposals
	i. Creation of an advisory committee to assist in program design and project selection
	j. Other (please explain):

## Part B: Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure

### State Legislative Budget Language

(226) \$69,000,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2023 is provided solely for a grant program for the development of electric vehicle charging infrastructure in rural areas, office buildings, multifamily housing, ports, schools and school districts, and state and local government offices.

(a) Grants in this subsection are provided solely for projects that provide a benefit to the public through development, demonstration, and deployment of clean energy technologies that save energy and reduce energy costs, reduce harmful air emissions, or increase energy independence for the state.

(b) Projects that receive funds under this subsection must be implemented by local governments, federally recognized tribal governments, or by public and private electrical utilities that serve retail customers in the state. Grant funding must be used for level 2 or higher charging infrastructure.

(c) The department must give preference to projects that provide level 3 or higher charging infrastructure.

(d) The department of commerce must coordinate with other electrification programs, including projects the department of transportation is developing, to determine the most effective distribution of the systems. The department must also collaborate with the interagency electric vehicle coordinating council established in Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 5974 (transportation resources) to implement this subsection and must work to meet benchmarks established in Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 5974 (transportation resources).

**Please answer the following questions within the context of the above budget language and Commerce’s program objectives.**

1. What specific challenges do you anticipate eligible applicants and partners might face when submitting applications or implementing this program, if any?  
Some examples of possible challenges: Lack of staff capacity to submit applications in response to an RFP, difficulty administering funds for joint projects, supply chain constraints that make it difficult to order necessary materials, shortage of electricians to install electric vehicle supply equipment, etc.

<p>2. What are the areas in which eligible program implementers would most benefit from receiving technical assistance? What approaches for providing technical assistance would be most helpful? This could be assistance with completing applications, implementing projects, or both.</p>	
<p>3. Should Commerce focus entirely on charging infrastructure for light-duty, passenger vehicles or allow charging infrastructure that serves other vehicle types? Keeping in mind that charging infrastructure must be at least level 2 and Commerce must prioritize level 3 or higher, which other vehicle types should be included in the program scope?</p>	
<p>4. Commerce will use a variety of data sources to help design the program, including the Washington Department of Health’s Environmental Health Disparities Map and National Renewable Energy Laboratory’s EVI-X modeling. What other data sources would you suggest Commerce use to help inform program design?</p>	
<p>5. Are there any successful models of electric vehicle charging infrastructure projects or programs that serve rural areas, office buildings, multifamily housing, ports, schools and school districts, or state and local government offices that you would recommend? In your response, please include a link to the program or the following information, if available. Suggested models:</p>	
<p>a. Location of the model program or project</p>	
<p>b. Entity that is implementing the model program or project, as well as any key partners</p>	
<p>c. Population served by the electric vehicle charging infrastructure</p>	
<p>d. Electric vehicle supply equipment (EVSE) level(s)</p>	
<p>e. Data or analysis that shows positive results</p>	

f. Any other information that would help Commerce assess the model program or project	
6. Are there any potential detrimental impacts that should be considered in the development and implementation of this program?	
7. What additional perspective would you share that may help Commerce design this program? Is there other information that is foundational to program design that you would like to provide?	

### Part C: Alternative Fuel Vehicle Incentives

#### State Legislative Budget Language

(a) \$25,000,000 of the electric vehicle incentive account—state appropriation is provided solely for the department to implement programs and incentives that promote the purchase of or conversion to alternative fuel vehicles. The department must work with the interagency electric vehicle coordinating council created in Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 5974 (transportation resources) to develop and implement alternative fuel vehicle programs and incentives.

(b) In developing and implementing programs and incentives under this subsection, the department must prioritize programs and incentives that:

(i) Will serve individuals living in an overburdened community, as defined in RCW 70A.02.010;

(ii) Will serve individuals who are in greatest need of this assistance in order to reduce the carbon emissions and other environmental impacts of their current mode of transportation in the overburdened community in which they live; and

(iii) Will serve low-income communities, communities with the greatest health disparities, and communities of color that are most likely to receive the greatest health benefits from the programs through a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants that will result in improved groundwater and stormwater quality, improved air quality, and reductions in noise pollution.

**Please answer the following questions within the context of the above budget language and Commerce’s program objectives. When answering, please note that “vehicles” is a broad term that can apply to more than passenger cars, ranging from electric bicycles to school buses, depending on program design.**

1. Commerce needs to determine one or more areas of program focus and must prioritize overburdened communities, individuals who are in greatest need of this assistance, low-income	
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<p>communities, communities with the greatest health disparities, and communities of color. Answers to the following questions will help us begin to develop options that we can bring back to communities in additional public engagement forums:</p>	
<p>a. How should Commerce define “alternative fuel vehicle” and which fuel or power sources (for example, electricity, hydrogen, biofuels, etc.) should be eligible in this program?</p>	
<p>b. Which vehicle types (for example, electric bicycles, light-duty passenger vehicles, medium- and heavy-duty trucks, buses, etc.) should be eligible for funding in this program?</p>	
<p>c. Should the program focus on helping individuals, non-profits and businesses purchase and own or lease vehicles themselves or provide access to public or non-profit vehicle share programs?</p>	
<p>d. How can Commerce ensure that people who own or use alternative fuel vehicles because of this program have access to charging or refueling stations where they live and work? Should this program include charging or refueling as an aspect of the incentive?</p>	
<p>e. How can Commerce design an incentive program aimed inherently at increasing demand for alternative fuel vehicles while the state faces a shortage of such vehicles? Are there ways to increase supply on the used/secondary market?</p>	
<p>f. Should Commerce direct all funding to a single program or design multiple programs and split the funding between them? What are the advantages of your preference? For example, more funding for one purpose allows greater positive effects, while splitting between several programs allows for a broader set of data and evaluation for future replicated and expanded programs.</p>	
<p>g. How should Commerce ensure programs consider both rural and urban transportation challenges in the context of</p>	

the language prioritizing overburdened communities?	
h. Are there any requirements not listed in the budget language that Commerce should include in its program design?	
2. Are there any successful models of alternative fuel vehicle incentive programs that prioritize individuals living in overburdened communities, individuals with greatest need of assistance, and communities of color, communities with the greatest health disparities, and low-income communities that you would recommend? In your response, please include a link to the program or the following information if it is available:	
a. Location of the model program	
b. Entity that is implementing the model program or project, as well as any key partners	
c. Population served by the incentive program	
d. Consumer education or awareness aspect of program (if any)	
e. Data or analysis that shows positive results	
f. Any other information that would help Commerce assess the model program or project	
3. Commerce will use a variety of data sources to help design the program, including Washington Department of Licensing vehicle title and registration data sets and the Environmental Protection Agency's EJScreen. What other data sources would you suggest Commerce use to help inform program design?	
4. Are there any potential detrimental impacts that should be considered in the development and implementation of this program?	
5. What additional perspective would you share that may help Commerce design this program? Is there other information that is foundational to program design that you would like to provide?	

**Additional responses as needed.**



