

**Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Coordinating Council public hearing**  
Holyoke Community College  
July 26, 2023, 6–8 p.m.

**EVICC attendees:**

- Undersecretary Mike Judge, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
- Dan Gatti, Director of Transportation Policy, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
- Staci Rubin, Commissioner, Department of Public Utilities
- Undersecretary Monica Tibbets-Nutt, Department of Transportation
- Audrey Horst on behalf of Sen. Mike Barrett, Chairman of the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy
- Magdalena Garncarz on behalf of Rep. Jeffrey Roy, Chairman of the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy

**Public attendees:**

- Thomas DeSellier, Granby
- Bob Armstrong, Conway
- Aaron Pressman, Boston Globe

**Additional attendees:**

- Jennifer Haugh, GreenerU

**Meeting agenda:**

**1. Call to order**

Judge called the meeting to order at 6:20 p.m.

**2. Slide presentation**

Judge gave a slide presentation offering a background on EVICC and its areas of assessment.

**3. Testimonials and questions**

Anderson: the state has now removed all chargers from rest areas on the Pike. It's really a terrible disgrace. We're all trying to get people to buy electric cars, and you guys are not helping. I write letters back to people who write magazine articles and how they're not helping, and most of them are funded by people who are not in favor of electric cars. Saw a sign on Mass Pike that said "there are no

EV chargers on the Pike.” You know, I wish you weren’t telling people that. Who’s seeing those signs?

DeSellier: I’ve been charging for nine years and most people are friendly about letting you charge at their house. I had a 40-mile commute and it was a predictable process. You could plug ten cars in this room [at HCC]. As far as no high-powered chargers on the interstate, this isn’t a big state, and cars get about 300 miles per charge. So I don’t know if that’s a big issue. My first car had an 84-mile range, so you couldn’t go past 50 miles before needing to hunt for a charger. Now the situation is different. I think we should promote 110V charging, which is really cheap—you can put them at schools and businesses and hotels. If you have a whole bank of them, people would charge after work or their shift at school and would recap all the miles they use to get there. For Level 2, I find the ones I use are cheaper (some of them are free, such as at Amherst College and municipalities). Some are \$0.25/kWh which is cheaper than at home, even with the National Grid discount. I discount the discount, because it’s not really any bargain. When you go to Big Y, you can regain all the mileage you can use while you’re shopping. The other thing is, a lot of the vehicles out there are fleets, and they have the most miles (e.g., trucks). If the state would concentrate on electrifying fleets, that would be equivalent to 10 commuters for each truck.

Gatti: great feedback. At one of our previous meetings, we heard from GECA that shared very similar feedback—to anticipate the need for bigger batteries and faster charging than what people actually report back as to what they actually need. That’s one of the core questions for us.

Judge: I think people’s experience with combustion cars where you have to fill it up and get gas, and in some people’s minds is the same thing—where are you going to go to charge it? Most people find that when they get a car, they don’t actually need a lot of public charging. But there’s still anxiety that prevents people from making the investment.

DeSellier: Some people want to jump in their cars and drive to Florida. It would be great to get a discounted rental vehicle for X dollars or free to alleviate range anxiety.

Anderson: the best deal is the “manager’s special” at rental—sometimes you get a Mercedes Benz EV. Sometimes these customers have never driven electric before. I used to hear this idea of renting a gas car for going to grandma’s house. But the maintenance on an EV is so cheap and the cars last so long.

Gatti: have seen great partnerships at Hertz and so forth.

Tibbets Nutt: re: charging on the Pike, what happened was EVGo removed the chargers and ability for charging without giving advance notice to MassDOT, so we were just as surprised as the public on this. We began an emergency procurement to get charging back in those locations, so it’s not just a direct replacement but also put in DCFCs. We are just as frustrated with the situation, but we just have to finish the procurement process.

Anderson: EVGo tells a different story. They say the state didn't sign a maintenance requirement and they were forbidden from maintaining chargers. He will call EVGo and hears they're not allowed to make repairs.

Tibbets Nutt: Can only give the answer of the information we have—can't speak to one-on-one conversations we've had with any staff members at MassDOT. We are actively involved in not just replacement, but upgrades. MassDOT is moving as quickly as we possibly can to get that dealt with. We're working with the federal government on the NEVI plan.

Gatti: without commenting on Mass Pike specifically, operations and maintenance on the first few rounds of charging stations built all the way back to ARRA funds during the Obama Administration was an issue nationally. A lot of stations ended up with very long-term operations and maintenance plans in place.

Anderson: and those early ones were pretty terrible. There are good ones in the north and southbound lanes of 495. The new generation of chargers are great, and EVGo has a whole new generation of chargers that I'm sure they'd be happy to install. But for those of us who don't drive Teslas, it's a little less than wonderful to pull into a Mass Pike rest area and find that there are only Tesla chargers and maybe one non-Tesla charger that doesn't work. Magazine articles love to talk about that.

Anderson: about six or eight months ago, he began writing to try to find somebody who cared about an issue that feels like a no-brainer, and hasn't yet found someone who cares. Wrote to federal DOT guys who push it back to the state. Not sure who to write to. Why are we all here? The reason we care about this and come to these meetings is we want to increase the sale of EVs. We need to dramatically increase the sale of electric cars, but didn't see an assessment of why people aren't buying electric cars. We all in our daily lives ask our friends (and non-friends), "would you consider buying an electric car?" When you drive an EV, it's a conversation you have all the time. And I get one very strong message when I ask this question: "Well, yeah, but..." It's always because there's no charging infrastructure out there. And that's absolutely not true. The map [in the slide deck] didn't show all of the chargers out there, because there are plenty that aren't on the books yet. But there are chargers out there, up and down the Mass Pike, that hotels or charging companies themselves have put in on the old Exit 5 (Chicopee) in a Home Depot parking lot that work great. A couple exits later, there are four EVGo chargers at a Hilton Express. More at the Worcester Auburn Mall, a dozen Electrify America chargers. And yet when I drive on the Mass Pike, I see "get off at this exit to buy gas"—fuel, food, lodging. Has been writing to feds and state over who is in charge of the regulations so that the charging companies can put charger signs up on the Mass Pike. "If you just buy the PlugShare app, it's really easy to find the chargers." I don't want to find them for me, but for Harry and Marge. The only way people are going to know that is if you have something else other than Exxon and Mobil and Denny's and McDonald's. And yet I did find somebody who was willing to listen to me, called me back and said "you're right, our regulations need to change to get chargers out there." They're for fuel, food, and lodging. But nobody's interested in doing it. The guy said "I have a full-time job—this is not my job." And I don't know whose job it is. I would love it if somebody picked it up as their job and said we are going to change those regulations. We don't have to pass any

laws, just regulations. And I also think they ought to be free, at least until we are starting to reach these kinds of numbers we're going to reach, I don't think we should charge people for making a sign and whatever. Somebody said this is our logo and they gave the image, the state would put it up there on a highway sign and take down one of the Exxon / Mobil signs. We need to sell more electric cars, and nobody knows there are chargers off the Mass Pike unless you drive an electric car. This is by far my biggest issue. Feels like a no-brainer, and yet he feels like DOT is so enmeshed in closing the Sumner Tunnel.

Rubin: you have come to the right place. We are working together across agencies to come up with recommendations.

Anderson: went to his Senator and Representative, and they said it's heavy-handed to pass legislation like that.

Judge: there's been a lot of insight from EVICC meetings over who has jurisdiction over what. He's learned a lot about maintenance. The Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation (OCABR) sits on the council; MassDOT is on the line. We can relay that.

Anderson: at the Mass Pike rest stop areas, there are no signs, except after you get off the rest stop you see a small sign with a picture of something that looks like a telephone booth, and nobody would know that that's what that is.

DeSillier: you have to distinguish between Tesla and other types. "EV charging this exit" and saw all the Tesla chargers, but didn't find any other types.

Anderson: Wants people to know there's charging infrastructure. Where should you put chargers—doesn't matter if people with EVs don't know where the existing ones are. Yes, they ought to be within a mile or three miles of the exit ramp, and there's rules about the signage (trailblazing).

Gatti: let's get your contact information.

Judge: we're accepting written comments through end of day August 4.

Anderson: another issue that something may have just recently happened and might head us in the direction of a solution. You have a lot of grants to help towns put in chargers in your town, and there are these great relationships between Eversource and the charging companies. They are calling up our town every day asking to put in a charger, and they'll fund most of it, etc. And it sounds really great. Anderson is the EV guy for his town and just retired as a selectman—but has urged them not to install a charger. All the towns around him all regret installing them and are about to turn them off. Utilities are charging demand charges. The problem is the timing of someone charging—10 minutes = \$0.50 for the consumer. Then the town of Northfield gets its bill from Eversource for many hundreds of dollars on \$8 income they got.

Judge: that legislation this changed this month.

Anderson: heard July 1 there was a slight change to the rules.

Rubin: DPU initially had a “demand charge holiday,” and so the bills going forward as of July 1 should be a lot lower. Now utilities can work with customers to decide when to charge vehicles at times when there will be better rates.

Anderson: this would be great metrics, in towns with heavy use.

Judge: basically the law was changed and directed utilities to issue a tariff to address this. Now if utilization of chargers is low, the majority is charged at a volumetric charge. Bills that towns will see should look very different.

Anderson: the other piece of this is, I don't know why we need a charger in our town, other than you can pat yourself on the back and say we have a charger. He has a 240V charger. A 110V charger can put on 40-50 miles on a car in a day and takes 4-5 days to get a car fully charged. 240V chargers are really great—every day I plug my car in, and it's full no matter how empty it was the night before. It's only wonderful if you have a home, and the people we need to encourage to get EVs are those with apartments or live in condos. Everyone he knows has their own personal home. Rarely does someone come to an event like this and say they don't own a home.

DeSillier: this depends on the commute—some people don't travel far. Every instance is different. Now as a retiree, he goes on long trips.

Anderson: most people have one car, and that car has to work for driving to grandma's house.

DeSillier: there are lots of two-car households. But single-family homes are low-hanging fruit to put in a 240V charger.

Anderson: his 240V charger cost him \$300.

DeSillier: that's not expensive for you, it's easy for you—it's relative.

Gatti: you might be interested in tuning in tomorrow—going to have people from City of Boston to talk about curbside charging, everybody would live within a 10-minute walk of a charger. There might be that question about what that town hall charger could do for you.

Anderson: regarding public parking lots, the town of Greenfield put in a public parking lot with a lot of chargers. They work well, but he thinks they need to find a way to have people park there for free overnight and make something free. Doesn't think charging should always be free. He's thankful when they have a good charger that works, and in 45 minutes or half an hour, he can get the 250 or 200 miles to go home. If he's happy, he'll pay for it. Car costs half per mile what a gas car costs.

DeSillier: those are relative things too—there is no Chevy Volt gasoline, so you can't make an apples to apples comparison. He has watched his bills through the years—if compared to a Prius vs. something that gets 20 mpg, which one is cheaper? There are lots of contingencies about costs—many scenarios. He gets most of his electricity free by parking at Amherst College or at the police station. He stopped at a high-power charger in North Carolina and they had a charging station where at 2 a.m., there was no one around, and yet they charged an idle fee to get you out of there from the minute he parked there and plugged in, even though no one else was there. The fee was \$45.

Judge: that's another area—get some standardization in how that's done so you're not having a completely inconsistent experience from one charger to the next.

DeSillier: he's also worried about all the cords all over the place. But the next thing is induction charging, and all of this is going to go out the window, because there are Massachusetts corporations at the forefront of that. That's years away. And in England, with on-street charging, you bring your own cord so there isn't a cord hanging there all the time that could get cut off or trip someone or get run over. I've had that in Northampton and cords have been ripped by the plow in winter.

Gatti: also one of the core conundrums of on-street use, is plows and ADA—which is also one of the reasons to do it, because people will run cords out their windows.

DeSillier: at his house, he was plugged into his car in the winter, and his daughter ran over the cord with the snowblower. In his town, he saw an EVSE charging station actually had a retractable cord. Eliminates a lot of liability.

Anderson: one other thought—where should we put chargers? You don't need to put chargers right in front of the door next to the handicap charging. People with EVs don't mind and don't deserve to get that kind of priority treatment. Some stores put a free charger near the front door, and it's to get people to come in and use that store. But it makes everybody else mad, so then someone driving a truck intentionally parks in the EV charging place, and then I have pulled in right behind the guy's truck so he couldn't get out. And he gets into a fight and you exchange words. If these chargers were off to the side somewhere where they weren't being treated like handicap stops. And then, if somebody is parked in a handicap spot, their car can be towed. The security guy at the mall has the authority to tow the car, but that's not true of EV chargers. Get legislation to treat charger spots more like handicap spots (minus the preferential parking location) so the mall security would have the authority to tow that car. It gets so tempting to want to get a sign that scolds people and put it on their windshield. With very strong glue. There's no law to back up the EV charging signage—not enforceable. Seems easy.

DeSillier: one other thing with charging that he noticed early on at a dark parking lot at night: on campus at all these call boxes, if you're plugged in, you can't start your car and leave until you've unplugged your car and leave. With an EV, you're stuck, unlike at a gas station where you can drive off and just break free from the hose. Not the case with an EV.

Anderson: I've been to a bunch of meetings lately where people want to talk about how to fill up the forums so that you and Eversource can put in chargers, and there are folks from very wealthy towns that want to put in many, many EV chargers. Doesn't think the state or towns should spend a penny on that.

DeSillier: how about at an apartment building? Quicker in and out, the better.

Anderson: he'll go to the Apple store at the mall, and Electrify America says his car will be done in 37 minutes. At the end of 37 minutes, he will start getting charged excessively because the car is done charging and he can't leave the Apple store. DCFCs are great, but don't always work well. You get off, wanna plug in, maybe get a cup of coffee, get back in the car and leave.

Judge: that's come through pretty clearly, being mindful about where fast chargers are located. They also use a lot of electricity. Determining locations can require potentially very expensive grid upgrades, and utilities may have an incentive to build, because they get money for that.

Anderson: I hope they put in more than one at rest stops. When they put in one and there's somebody there.

DeSillier: a Tesla adapter!

Anderson: Tesla, Ford, and GM have made a deal to create adapters. But it'll take a couple years to figure out.

Judge: we have this report that we're putting together, but that's not the end of it—this council exists indefinitely and has to report to the legislature every two years, so we're hopeful to make sure there's cross collaboration across state government to make sure we're doing this the right way.

DeSillier: regarding Level 2 chargers at condominiums, he owns two condos. At one, they won't let you put one in, and the other one has a central charger so everyone can use it. If you can just get the condo associations to put one in the neighborhood if they won't let every apartment have one...

Anderson: has a home—if he was in an apartment, he couldn't put in solar, e.g. Lots of people just can't take advantage of these nice benefits the state is paying for so that people who are paying taxes, their tax money is helping us (and our electric bills).

Judge: the Legislature has appropriated \$50 million for us to use as we see fit.

DeSillier: the town has chargers that haven't worked in two years. There were incentives to install chargers at new library, etc., but they were never operational.

#### **4. Adjourn**

Judge adjourned the meeting at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Jennifer A. Haugh*

Vice President of Planning and Customer Engagement  
GreenerU