



**Ohio Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee  
Proponent Testimony on Senate Bill 307 (Rulli)  
Testimony of Mryia Williams  
Chapter Leader, Drive Electric Columbus**

**March 31, 2022**

Chair McColley, Vice-Chair Schuring, Ranking Member Williams, and Members of the Energy and Public Utilities Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer proponent testimony on Senate Bill 307 (SB 307) - Accelerating Ohio's Auto Industry. My name is Mryia Williams and I volunteer as the Chapter Leader of Drive Electric Columbus. Our group along with five others are the regional divisions of the Drive Electric Ohio initiative. Drive Electric Columbus is an education and outreach program fostering Electric Vehicle adoption and ownership. We are a group composed of Electric Vehicle enthusiasts and owners who volunteer their time and personal electric vehicles for showcases, ride and drives, and speaking engagements. We also support owners by bringing them together to socialize with others who have a common interest, learn about new Electric Vehicle (EV) policies, celebrate charging infrastructure launches, and offer monthly programming on various topics about services for EV ownership.

Drive Electric Columbus supports Senate Bill 307 for Accelerating Ohio's Auto Industry. The multi-part legislative package will bolster Ohio's workforce for EV production, support the needs of the industry, grow the EV market, and send a signal that Ohio is ready to be a leader in the Electric Vehicle industry.

Currently, Ohio has fallen behind and we are overlooked by auto manufacturers. In 2019, when my husband and I wanted to purchase a second electric vehicle, we decided on the new to market Kia Niro EV but found it was unavailable for sale in Ohio. A part of what I do as Chapter Leader of Drive Electric Columbus is building relationships with dealerships to help get people into the seats of their electric vehicles and have conversations to support the education of the sales staff on the different needs of electric vehicles. I spoke to numerous local Kia dealerships and one of them even tried to place an order for the Niro EV, but the corporate office canceled the order. In the end, we wanted the electric vehicle

enough to drive more than 400 miles to purchase it in Maryland where it was allowed to be sold. It saddened me to not be able to use the local dealership, to see them lose business, all because Ohio wasn't on the electrification plan of the manufacturer. Three years later, we still have manufacturers skipping Ohio when they layout sales maps for their electric models and we still have people buying them out of the area.

You might be wondering why. Why would a manufacturer choose to block dealerships in an entire state from being allowed to order or carry an inventory of a popular model they produce? There are multiple reasons including dealerships not having the equipment or trained technicians to service the Electric Vehicles, knowing other states offer purchase incentives that drive easier sales, or that the state doesn't have an organizing body responsible for helping to promote and create policy to support electrification. Senate Bill 307 would help remedy these points by funding technician training programs, offering sales incentives for Electric Vehicle purchases, and creating a task force to track trends and build an electrification plan.

For the end consumer, outside of sales and service for Electric Vehicles, the biggest ongoing challenge is EV charging infrastructure. Ohio has significant gaps in our Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment (EVSE) outside of metro areas which hold back EV adoption not just by rural Ohioans, but also by city dwellers who know they would face challenges when trying to make the normal drives such as those between Dayton and Maumee or Columbus and Pittsburgh. I originally hail from Monroe County and my husband is from Belmont County, between those two counties today we find one Level 2 charger and absolutely no DCFC (fast charging). When we travel to visit our family and friends, we have to either rely on utilizing portable EVSE or we have to navigate from Columbus to their homes in those rural counties and then back to Cambridge, about 80 miles away, to find adequate charging options. If your constituents in rural counties want to consider an Electric Vehicle, they would find it difficult if not impossible to do their daily driving without exceeding the range of those vehicles due to the lack of infrastructure. Even Ohioans with ample infrastructure in their cities may struggle when it comes to wanting to travel in-state for family, vacation, or business.

While I specifically name Belmont and Monroe counties, those are not the only places in Ohio being left behind. We should not want our great state to be the next West Virginia which has a standing reputation in the Electric Vehicle community as lacking EV Infrastructure. Because of the lack of investment and development in WV, Electric Vehicle owners route plan either around the state or drive straight through without stopping. Ohioans do not want tourists to skip over us and plan routes around us because we lack Electric Vehicle Infrastructure. Making sure we have training programs for installing and maintaining charging supply equipment is vital to remaining competitive in the fast-growing Electric Vehicle Industry. Developing a plan to regulate and invest in Electric Vehicle infrastructure is key if we want to move into a role of leadership in this field. These points are addressed and supported in the Accelerating Ohio's Auto Industry bill.

Senate Bill 307 will help to protect and expand Ohio's place in the Auto Industry as we enter into an era with electrification at the forefront of plans by manufacturers and consumers. Ohioans are depending

on you to support their blue-collar jobs in manufacturing, construction, installation, and technical services. They are asking that you remember their white-collar jobs in vehicles sales and engineering new designs and technologies. On behalf of hundreds of members of Drive Electric Columbus, thousands of those employed by the Auto Industry in Ohio, and all the others who are now or will in the future be impacted by the electrification of vehicles, I urge you to support Senate Bill 307.

Thank you again for allowing me to offer my proponent testimony. I look forward to your eventual committee vote in favor of this bill and ask that you send SB307 to the full Senate with the recommendation to adopt it. Ohioans are counting on you to help drive us into an electric future.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mryia Williams".

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