

SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
Senator Thomas Umberg, Chair
2025-2026 Regular Session

SB 1283 (Ashby)
Version: April 8, 2026
Hearing Date: April 21, 2026
Fiscal: Yes
Urgency: No
AM

SUBJECT

Electric vehicle charging stations: installation: permits

DIGEST

This bill streamlines local permitting processes related to electrical vehicle (EV) charging stations by expanding existing ministerial approval to include related infrastructure, requiring local governments to update their EV charging stations ordinances and checklists by December 2027, and requires local governments to provide a written notice to the applicant of the date the application was deemed approved and identify all permits and authorizations that have been granted no later than 30 days after an application has been deemed approved. The bill provides applicants to institute a proceeding for injunctive or declaratory relief, or for a writ of mandamus, in any court of competent jurisdiction, to enforce EV charging station permitting requirements.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The author and sponsor argue that EV charging deployment is not keeping pace with growing demand, which creates infrastructure gaps, increases costs for developers, and undermines the state's climate and transportation goals. One issue they point out as a cause of this is barriers in the permitting process at the local level. This bill seeks to address these barriers by streamlining local permitting processes through expanding existing requirements for ministerial approval of EV charging stations to, among other things, include related infrastructure, such as canopies and on-site energy storage systems. Additionally, the bill requires local governments to update their EV charging stations ordinances and checklists by December 2027. The bill provides specific authority for a permit applicant or the Attorney General (AG) to bring an action for injunctive or declaratory relief, or for a writ of mandamus and requires the award of reasonable attorney's fees and costs as well as expert fees and costs to a prevailing plaintiff. The bill is sponsored by the Electric Vehicle Charging Association and supported by various businesses that provide EV charging. The bill is opposed by the California State Association of Counties, the League of California Cities, and the Rural

County Representatives of California. The bill passed the Senate Local Government Committee on a vote of 6 to 1.

The author agreed to amendments in the Senate Local Government Committee that, due to timing, are being processed in this Committee. These specific amendments can be found at the end of the analysis.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE LAW

Existing law:

- 1) Requires counties and cities to administratively approve an application to install EV charging stations and issue a building permit or similar nondiscretionary permit. (Gov. Code §§ 65850.7 & 65850.71.)
- 2) Limits review of an application to a review of whether the project meets all health and safety requirements of local, state, and federal law, as specified.
 - a) If an applicant would have to apply for a use permit if the building official makes a finding, based on substantial evidence, that the EV charging station could have a specific, adverse impact upon the public health and safety.
 - b) These decisions are appealed to the planning commission of the local agency. (Gov. Code § 65850.7(b) & (d).)
- 3) Prohibits a local agency from denying an application for a use permit to install an EV charging station unless it makes written findings based upon substantial evidence in the record that the proposed installation will have a specific, adverse impact upon the public health or safety, and there is no feasible method to satisfactorily mitigate or avoid the specific, adverse impact. (Gov. Code § 65850.7(c).)
- 4) Requires every local agency to adopt an ordinance that creates an expedited, streamlined permitting process for EV charging stations, as provided.
 - a) Requires every local agency to adopt a checklist of all requirements that EV charging stations have to comply with in order to be eligible for expedited review.
 - b) An application that satisfies the information requirements in the checklist is deemed complete. (Gov. Code § 65850.7(g)(1).)

This bill:

- 1) Expands the existing EV charging station permitting provisions to also encompass related infrastructure, including canopies, on-site energy storage systems, and supporting infrastructure.

- 2) Requires an application to install an EV charging station to be deemed approved without notice or a public hearing being required.
- 3) Requires a local government, no later than 30 days after an application has been deemed approved, to provide written notice to the applicant of the date the application was deemed approved and identify all permits and authorizations that have been granted.
 - a) Authorizes an applicant to proceed with construction of the project described in a deemed approved application prior to receipt of the notice.
- 4) Requires, if a local government has not adopted or amended an ordinance or checklist, an application to contain specified information.
- 5) Requires amendments to local ordinances and checklists which implement these changes to be completed no later than December 31, 2027.
- 6) Requires the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (Go-Biz) to develop and publicly post a template that applicants may use to document their application's compliance and submit to the applicable city, county, or city and county. Submittal of this document is voluntary and is not a prerequisite for application approval.
- 7) Grants an applicant the right to bring an action for injunctive or declaratory relief, or for a writ of mandamus, in any court of competent jurisdiction, to enforce EV charging permitting provisions.
- 8) Requires the court to award the prevailing plaintiff reasonable attorney's fees and costs as well as expert fees and costs in any action brought by an applicant or the AG.

COMMENTS

1. Stated need for the bill

The author writes:

California has led the nation in advancing clean transportation, including streamlining approvals for electric vehicle charging stations that meet California safety standards. But ambiguity in existing law has prevented local governments from streamlining essential additions to electric vehicle charging stations, such as canopies and on-site energy storage systems.

SB 1283 addresses this gap by allowing local governments to administratively approve critical charging station additions and update their permitting processes by

the end of 2027. By making approvals faster, clearer, and more consistent, this bill will help accelerate electric vehicle infrastructure and continue to support California's clean energy and transportation goals.

2. EV charging infrastructure goals and current permitting statutes

In an effort to do its part to reduce the effects of climate change, California has set aggressive goals for reducing its greenhouse gas emissions. Since the transportation sector emits about half of California's greenhouse gas emissions, former Governor Brown called for five million electric cars, buses, and trucks to be on California roads by 2030. (Executive Order B-48-18 (Jan. 2018).) The Executive Order set infrastructure and vehicle goals for the state of 250,000 shared EV chargers, including 10,000 direct current fast chargers, by 2025. These goals place California on the path to meet the charging needs of 5 million zero emissions vehicles (ZEVs) by 2030.

To reach these aggressive goals for EV use, California needs to quickly develop corresponding infrastructure. A report by the California Energy Commission (CEC) found that:

1.01 million public and shared private chargers are needed to support 7.1 million passenger plug-in electric vehicles in 2030, and 2.11 million public and shared private chargers are needed to support 15.2 million passenger plug-in electric vehicles in 2035. An additional 114,500 chargers are needed to support the 157,000 medium- and heavy-duty vehicles anticipated for 2030.¹

The Legislature passed AB 1236 (Chiu, Ch. 568, Stats. 2015) in furtherance of these goals. AB 1236 required counties and cities to administratively approve an application to install EV charging stations and issue a building permit or similar nondiscretionary permit. Review of a permit application was limited to review of whether the project meets all health and safety requirements of local, state, and federal law. However, an applicant would have to apply for a use permit if the building official makes a finding, based on substantial evidence, that the EV charging station could have a specific, adverse impact upon the public health and safety. These decisions are appealed to the planning commission of the local agency.

AB 1236 also made other changes to streamline the permitting process by:

- Prohibiting a local agency from denying an application for a use permit to install an EV charging station unless it makes written findings based upon substantial evidence in the record that the proposed installation will have a specific, adverse

¹ CEC, *Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Assessment - AB 2127*, available at <https://www.energy.ca.gov/data-reports/reports/electric-vehicle-charging-infrastructure-assessment-ab-2127>.

impact upon the public health or safety, and there is no feasible method to satisfactorily mitigate or avoid the specific, adverse impact.

- Required every local agency to adopt an ordinance that creates an expedited, streamlined permitting process for EV charging stations.
- Required every local agency to adopt a checklist of all requirements that EV charging stations have to comply with in order to be eligible for expedited review.
- Makes an application that satisfies the information requirements in the checklist deemed complete.
- Required a local agency to approve the application and issue all required permits when the local agency confirms the application and supporting documents are complete and meets the checklist requirements.

AB 970 (McCarty, Ch. 710, Stats. 2021) expanded on the requirements of AB 1236 to make an application deemed complete if the local building official does not identify deficiencies after either: five business days for applications to construct at least one and up to 25 charging stations at a single site; or 10 business days for applications to construct over 25 charging stations at a single site. Additionally, an application is deemed approved 20 business days after the application was deemed complete for an installation of up to 25 charging stations at a single site, or 40 business days for an installation of more than 25 charging stations, if the building official hasn't acted on the application.

The Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz) has been tracking compliance by locals with the state's EV charger streamlining laws and found that 358 cities and counties in the state are fully streamlined, 77 are partially streamlined, and the remaining 105 cities and counties are not streamlined.² The Electric Vehicle Charging Association, the sponsor of the bill, states that “, many local governments maintain additional requirements, specific design standards, or prolonged review timelines that delay or discourage installation.”

3. Streamlining local permitting processes related to electrical vehicle (EV) charging stations

This bill seeks to streamline local permitting processes related to electrical vehicle (EV) charging stations in several ways:

- expands the existing provisions to also encompass related infrastructure, such as canopies, on-site energy storage systems, and supporting infrastructure;
- requires amendments to local ordinances and checklist to implement the bill's provisions to be completed no later than December 31, 2027;

² Go-Biz, *Plug-in Electric Vehicle Charging Station Readiness*, available at <https://business.ca.gov/industries/zero-emission-vehicles/plug-in-readiness/>.

- requires an application to install an EV charging station to be deemed approved without notice or a public hearing being required;
- requires a local government, no later than 30 days after an application has been deemed approved, to provide written notice to the applicant of the date the application was deemed approved and identify all permits and authorizations that have been granted;
- authorizes an applicant to proceed with construction of the project described in a deemed approved application prior to receipt of the notice; and
- if a local government has not adopted or amended an ordinance or checklist, as provided, specifies certain information that an application is to contain.

The bill also provides an applicant the right to bring an action for injunctive or declaratory relief, or for a writ of mandamus, in any court of competent jurisdiction, to enforce these permitting provisions. Under the bill, the court is required to award the prevailing plaintiff reasonable attorney's fees and costs as well as expert fees and costs in any action brought by an applicant or the AG.

4. Senate Judiciary Committee Amendment

The author has agreed to amend the fees provision from *mandatory* to at the *discretion* of the court if the court finds that that the city, county, or city and county is not making a good faith effort to comply with the requirements of the permitting provisions.

The specific amendment is as follows:

Subdivision (h) of Section 65850.71 of the Government Code is amended to read:

(h) (1) An applicant may institute a proceeding for injunctive or declaratory relief, or for a writ of mandamus, in any court of competent jurisdiction, to enforce the provisions of this section.

(2) In an action brought by an applicant or the Attorney General, the court ~~shall~~ *may* award the prevailing plaintiff reasonable attorney's fees and costs as well as expert fees and ~~costs~~ *costs if the court finds that the city, county, or city and county is not making a good faith effort to comply with the requirements of this section.*

(3) This subdivision shall not be construed to restrict or diminish any court's authority to grant appropriate relief or impose any order it deems proper.

5. Stakeholder statements

The Electric Vehicle Charging Association, sponsor of the bill, writes:

[...] While state law encourages streamlined ministerial approval of EV charging projects, many local governments maintain additional requirements, specific design standards, or prolonged review timelines that delay or discourage installation. These barriers are especially pronounced for more complex projects, such as those that include canopies or on-site energy storage systems, which may be treated as separate or discretionary developments subject to additional review. As a result, EV charging deployment is not keeping pace with growing demand, creating infrastructure gaps, increasing costs for developers, and undermining the state's climate and transportation goals.

California currently has approximately 201,180 EV charging ports of the 2.11 million chargers the state will need by 2035 to support its zero-emission vehicle goals, per the CEC's AB 2127 Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Assessment. EVCA members consistently identify local permitting inconsistencies as one of the most significant practical obstacles to rapid deployment, particularly for charging projects involving canopies, battery storage, or multiple EVSE units. SB 1283 provides that certainty. [...]

The Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), California State Association of Counties (CSAC), and League of California Cities write in opposition unless amended stating:

[...] As currently written, SB 1283 creates a pathway for automatic approvals without full safety, design, or site-specific review if statutory timelines are missed. This introduces a real risk that large-scale installations, including overhead canopies and high-voltage battery storage systems, could proceed without comprehensive safety review or appropriate conditions of approval. Unlike other areas of state law, the bill does not clearly preserve local authority to deny or condition projects where legitimate health, safety, or site constraints exist. The bill also constrains local oversight of construction-related safety measures in the public right-of-way by limiting the ability to delay or condition approvals for traffic control plans and related safety submissions. This raises additional concerns regarding pedestrian safety, traffic management, and construction impacts in densely populated or high-traffic areas.

Additionally, SB 1283 establishes a clear private right of action, allowing applicants to seek writs of mandamus or injunctive relief against local governments. While the bill does not explicitly provide attorney's fees for private litigants, it does mandate fee recovery for actions brought by the Attorney General and preserves existing pathways for fee recovery under state law. Combined with strict procedural requirements and automatic approval mechanisms, this structure creates a

heightened litigation environment that will disproportionately impact local governments with limited staffing and resources.

Cities and counties are committed partners in advancing the state's zero-emission transportation goals. However, this transition must be implemented in a manner that ensures public safety, maintains infrastructure integrity, and respects the role of local governments in land use and permitting decisions. To accomplish this, we request that SB 1283 be amended to clearly preserve local authority to address health and safety risks, eliminate "deemed approved" provisions for complex infrastructure, provide realistic timelines aligned with local staffing and project complexity, and reduce legal liability for good-faith local permitting decisions. [...]

SUPPORT

Electric Vehicle Charging Association (sponsor)
California Electric Transportation Coalition
Chargepoint, Inc.
Electrify America, LLC
Ionna
Tesla Motors, Inc.

OPPOSITION

California State Association of Counties
League of California Cities
Rural County Representatives of California

RELATED LEGISLATION

Pending Legislation: None known.

Prior Legislation: *See Comment 2, above.*

PRIOR VOTES

Senate Local Government Committee (Ayes 6, Noes 0)

AMENDMENTS TO SB 1283 AS AGREED TO BY THE AUTHOR IN THE SENATE
LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

Amendment 1

On page 4, in line 24, strike out “and” and insert:

or

Amendment 2

On page 4, in line 34, after “with” insert:

a

Amendment 3

On page 5, in lines 27 and 28, strike out “Any electric vehicle supply equipment installed at the” and insert:

An

Amendment 4

On page 5, in line 31, strike out “An” and insert:

Any electric vehicle supply equipment installed at an

Amendment 5

On page 6, in line 27, strike out “Amendments to” and strike out lines 28 to 30, inclusive

Amendment 6

On page 7, between lines 3 and 4, insert:

(C) Amendments to ordinances and checklists to implement the amendments to this section made by the act that added this subparagraph shall be completed no later than December 31, 2027.

Amendment 7

On page 9, in line 40, strike out “and” and insert:

or

Amendment 8

On page 13, in line 28, strike out “the” and insert:

that

Amendment 9

On page 14, in line 8, strike out “(g)” and insert:

(f)

Amendment 10

On page 15, in line 28, after “adopted” insert:

or amended

Amendment 11

On page 15, in line 30, strike out “applicant” and insert:

application

Amendment 12

On page 16, in line 36, strike out “(h)” and insert:

(g)

Amendment 13

On page 17, in line 8, after “by” insert:

an applicant or