Forth

Please see attached PDF for comments from Forth on the draft Clean Fuels rulemaking.

April 25, 2022

Rachel Assink
WA Department of Ecology
P.O. Box 47600
Olympia, WA 98504-7600

RE: Forth comments on draft rules for Chapter 173-424 WAC, the Clean Fuel Standard

Dear Ms. Assink,

I write you today on behalf of Forth, a nonprofit trade association whose mission is to electrify transportation by bringing people together to create solutions that reduce pollution and barriers to access. Forth is pleased that Washington is establishing a Clean Fuels Program and we have appreciated the stakeholder process Ecology has been coordinating over the last year. As you wrap up the informal comment period for the draft rules, we would like to share our brief recommendations on the residential charging elements of the proposal.

As a starting proposition, Forth supports a vigorous Clean Fuels program to lower the carbon intensity of transportation fuels. From our perspective, the best way to do that is by electrifying all modes of transport, so Forth strongly believes that Clean Fuels credits must be used to drive transportation electrification (TE).

However credits for home charging of electric vehicles are assigned, we believe that entities receiving the credits should be given clear guidance on allowable uses of the credits to accelerate clean transportation (impact), should ensure substantial benefits flow to historically underserved communities (equity), and should be required to report on how credits are used (transparency.) These core values of impact, equity, and transparency are more important than what share of credits is allocated to which market actor (automakers, utilities, or others.)

We also believe strongly that Washington should establish a strong statewide program, such as the Clean Mobility Fund we suggested in our initial comments to Ecology in November 2021. Simply put, there are certain investments that are best made at a statewide or regional level rather than, for example, within individual utility service territories. This includes:

- Coordinated regional consumer education and outreach campaigns, such as advertising, dealer outreach and engagement, ride and drive events, etc. Car purchases do not respect utility boundaries, and information, incentives, etc. should be consistent statewide.

- Funding of community-based projects that serve overburdened and historically underserved communities, including rural areas and frontline/BIPOC communities. Some share of credit revenue should be invested based on need and to promote access - not simply based on where cars are currently registered.
- Projects of regional significance that transcend individual utility service territories (e.g., filling gaps in regional charging networks, electrification of long haul trucking corridors).

One way to achieve this goal might be the “Backstop Aggregator” model for unclaimed Clean Fuels credits from home charging, as has been done in Oregon’s program. In Oregon, Forth (through its 501(c)(3) arm the Forth Mobility Fund) was chosen by Oregon DEQ as Backstop Aggregator in 2017. Since we began administering those credits in 2018, Forth has monetized nearly $2 million in credits and directed it to deliver statewide consumer outreach, engage utilities on the benefits of electric vehicles, and implement pilot projects in targeted areas of Oregon. Forth also constantly seeks other opportunities and funds to advance transportation electrification and manages a variety of projects that leverage Clean Fuels funds including contracts with utilities, U.S. Department of Energy projects, and partnerships with regional environmental groups. Our work plans and annual reports are public documents available on the Oregon DEQ website.

However, the “Backstop Aggregator” approach is voluntary and temporary. In Oregon, within three years, virtually all utilities had opted in and this function had become largely moribund. Ecology could allow or encourage utilities or other credit recipients to contribute to a Clean Mobility Fund as a specifically allowable expense. However, there is little incentive for credit recipients to do so. Rather than relying entirely on a temporary and voluntary approach, we suggest that Ecology mandate a specific share of home charging credits (e.g. 10-20%) that must be allocated to this central Clean Mobility Fund on an annual basis throughout the life of the program.

Of course, there are many administrative details that would need to be worked out to address oversight and program funding for such a function. Forth has some ideas along those lines and would be happy to discuss in further detail at the appropriate time. For now, we wanted to again raise the idea as a topic for potential future consideration.

In sum, Forth is excited to have a Clean Fuels program on the horizon in Washington and we are eager to work with Ecology and other stakeholders to help shape a program to advance equitable transportation electrification in the state. Whoever gets to claim credits, those entities should be required to use them to maximize TE and and have transparent reporting on how the credits are used. As noted, we believe that there is some work that no single utility or other entity can do themselves, and thus an aggregated Clean Mobility Fund with similar spending and reporting requirements could solve a lot of problems.

We look forward to seeing the next iteration of the rules later this year and engaging more deeply as the rulemaking proceeds. Thanks for considering our comments and please let us know how we may be of assistance moving forward.

Sincerely,

Jeanette Shaw
Policy Director
jeanettes@forthmobility.org
C: 971-285-2307