

# Vote Solar

Greetings members and commissioners: My name is Catherine Zingg, and I am the Director of Indigenous Partnerships at Vote Solar in the Interior West ( a national nonprofit dedicated to solar energy initiatives), I represent over 1,000 members in New Mexico with one of my priorities being Tribal relations New Mexico. I am a proud member of the Ho-Chunk Nation of Wisconsin, I am a daughter, a Tribal advocate, supporter of the proposed EV rules, and concerned and connected with what the potential of these EV rules will mean for the 23 Tribal Nations and Pueblos within the state of New Mexico. I think it is fitting that we are having these conversations and important rulemakings now— as we approach celebrating the second anniversary of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Jobs Act, one of the most successful investments in climate infrastructure and domestic supply chains that our country has seen under the Biden administration. All with the goal of building a clean energy economy. And it's working, but this is not to necessarily draw all the light and attention to federal policymakers— but to state-level policymakers like you who sit on this board and actually have the ability to continue building on rules and legacies that slash costs on cleaner technologies such as EVs for every day New Mexicans. Already, New Mexico has been allocated \$22 million to date to build out a network of EV chargers across the state through the BIL— with more to come. And I know what that means, more electricity usage within the state means a higher need for reliability to prevent outages and make the grid more resilient. Well, this is also being addressed by federal climate dollars with approximately \$74 million allocated for clean energy updates to create that reliability.

Vote Solar is a non-profit dedicated to pushing state-level solar policy with a people-centered approach: and for me, this means working with Tribes and Pueblos in New Mexico and hearing their concerns and amplifying their visions for a energy independent future as equal partners with the state; naturally our work has extended to EVs, and for me Tribal EV initiatives as they lead to ultimately this idea of energy independence. Vote Solar has participated formally in several transportation electrification plans. And I do not speak on behalf of any Tribal Nation, but I do know that there is excitement from Tribal communities to be part of the EV transition. And it is exciting. Picture an inter-tribal EV charging network (like the one established in Minnesota by a coalition of Tribes, NGOs, and the state's utility Xcel Energy) and charging infrastructure wholly owned and managed by Tribes and Pueblos in the state, providing additional revenue to these communities, workforce development, tourism in rural areas.... Each tribal nation, connected by these future EV Pathways with casinos, restaurants, and retail offerings— all stimulated by these early rulemaking decisions. Before assuming that every Tribe and Pueblo will have fear and anxiety about EV rules and increased EV sales within the state, I would encourage you all to have conversations with these Tribal leaders for solutions. Tribal concerns will be different. Thinking ahead, I'm already preparing for how Tribes and Pueblos can connect with future transportation electrification plans between utilities and the PRC, and how they retain sovereignty in every step of the way (to clarify, Tribes and Pueblos do not need these rules to pursue EV adoption and rulemakings within their communities, but state collaboration is at times important in implementing these ideas across state and Tribal lands).

In closing, I urge the board to adopt these rules. It will position New Mexico to be ahead and in front of this evolving industry, and it will position collaborative networks between the state and Tribes and Pueblos. There's hope in these rules to address real climate issues; not anxiety or threats to existing vehicle owners in the state. It is all connected, solar energy, the clean energy transition, clean cars— and what a good day to be able to remind the board and the others listening in on the

importance of Tribal perspectives in this decision making process and the future for EVs for Tribal communities as well. Thank you for letting me speak. Pınagigi.