

Before the House Transportation Committee
Presented by Zack Pistora, Kansas Sierra Club
Opponent to HB 2529
February 17th, 2016



Chairman Proehl and Honorable Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong opposition of HB 2529; which increases annual registration fees on hybrid and electric vehicles. HB 2529 has some serious negative repercussions, listed here:

HB 2529 unfairly raises costs on hybrid and electric vehicles disproportional to their usage of roads. HB 2529 would escalate registration fees for hybrid vehicles five times over to \$150 per year, and ten times over for electric vehicles (EVs) at \$300 per year. These fees dramatically exceed their proportional motor fuel tax these vehicles would pay at the pump. For example, if an electric vehicle drove 20,000 miles in Kansas in a year, let's say with an average of 30 mpg, the total fuel tax at 24 cents/gallon would equal \$160, nearly half of the proposed registration fee. It is important to note that hybrid vehicles still pay motor fuel taxes, as they still require gasoline. These fee increases also appear to add more costs to these lighter vehicles than 20,000 lb. trucks, which create significant more damage to Kansas roads than hybrids and EVs. Hybrids and EVs are better for overall road safety than big trucks and SUVs too, so why discourage their adoption by adding higher, unnecessary fees?

HB 2529 discourages new consumer purchasing and harms our commercial image.

By upping the fees on hybrids and EVs, the state is discouraging our businesses and residents from transitioning to less-polluting vehicles. HB 2529 would likely stifle potential buyers from purchasing these types of vehicles in Kansas. Moreover, this legislation could even discourage commercial enterprises and potential residents from moving to Kansas if they realize their vehicle fees will be five or ten times higher for less-polluting vehicles than other vehicles. What impression might this give to outsiders about the ways of Kansas? Kansas cannot afford to look bad for punishing sustainable lifestyles and technological innovation. Other states are capitalizing off of the new industry of hybrids and EVs. With our centered geography, we have an advantage for our car dealers to sell their hybrids and EVs out of Kansas. However, HB 2529 would likely deter any additional commercial interest.

HB 2529 takes the steering wheel away from the free market; the state government should not pick winners and losers when it comes to vehicular choice.

Kansans who drive hybrids and EVs have spent extra dollars to reduce their fossil fuel consumption and benefit our collective health and environment. These committed individuals and businesses are helping the whole on their own accord. We should not be raising their annual registration fees, especially when they likely pay higher property taxes anyway for owning a newer and probably more expensive vehicle. The free market is driving the growing use of EVs and hybrids; HB 2529 goes against our market capitalism model by interjecting governmental regulation and cost burdens on vehicle choice. The type of vehicle discrimination in HB 2529 opens the door for more regulation and more fees on other vehicles too. What's next for Kansas? Increased fees for hearses and buses? All vehicles? If you think hybrids and EVs are stealing money from Kansas roads... you might want to look at what our Governor's office is currently doing to highway funds. Please vote no HB 2529 and save us from having more trouble down the road.

Sincerely,

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The Sierra Club is the largest grassroots environmental organization dedicated to preserving, protecting, and enjoying our great outdoors. The Kansas Chapter represents our state's strongest grassroots voice on environmental matters for more than forty years.