

Senate Transportation Committee

Vivian Hall 271-3091

SB 628-FN, enabling curbside electric-vehicle charging.

Hearing Date: January 20, 2026

Time Opened: 2:45 p.m.

Time Closed: 3:09 p.m.

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Ricciardi, McConkey, Ward, Prentiss and Fenton

Members of the Committee Absent : None

Bill Analysis: This bill enables highway authorities to license curbside electric vehicle charging devices in public rights-of-way, establishes procedures for adjacent host property electrical supply and reimbursement, clarifies enforcement and siting standards, and affirms that owners and operators of such charging devices are not public utilities.

Sponsors:

Sen. Watters

Sen. Fenton

Sen. Rosenwald

Sen. Avard

Rep. Cormen

Rep. B. Boyd

Rep. Edgar

Who supports the bill: 29 individuals signed in support of SB 628-FN. Contact vivian.hall@gc.nh.gov for further details

Who opposes the bill: 1 individual signed in opposition of SB 628-FN. Contact vivian.hall@gc.nh.gov for further details

Who is neutral on the bill: 2 individuals signed in as neutral for SB 628-FN. Contact vivian.hall@gc.nh.gov for further details

Summary of testimony presented in support:

Senator David Watters, District 4

- Senator Watters introduced Senate Bill 628-FN.
- This bill would authorize state and local highway authorities to license curbside EV charging devices in public rights-of-way, clarifies permitting (including on

federally funded roads), sets enforcement rules, and affirms that charging owners/operators are not public utilities.

- This legislation would allow businesses, apartment buildings, and other host properties to use their existing electrical supply to power curbside chargers, typically via a small trench in the sidewalk leading to a curbside post with built-in safety features and managed cables.
- Independent operators install and manage the chargers, consumers pay to charge, and host properties can receive reimbursement or revenue sharing.
- Hosts may use an existing meter or install a dedicated one, while remaining outside utility regulation.
- SB 628-FN would establish standards for siting, ADA accessibility, cable management, safety codes, parking enforcement, data reporting, damage restoration, and rulemaking

Senator Ricciardi cited concerns that EV charging spaces could displace front-of-building handicap parking and asked whether chargers could be installed in locations that preserve priority access for individuals with disabilities.

Senator Watters referred to the language in the bill regarding handicap parking and said these EV charging spots cannot impede upon the handicap spots.

Neutral Information Presented:

Michael Mezer, National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Program Manager, New Hampshire Department of Transportation and David Rodriguez, Assistant Commissioner

- The Department of Transportation has no position in SB 628-FN.
- Mr. Mezer cited concerns about public interest, safety, and potential impacts on traffic and highway operations, given that the operators are not utilities.
- He said that safeguards are needed to prevent private or exclusive use and to allow highway authorities to limit hours of use, including during snow emergencies or other roadway needs.
- Mr. Mezer highlighted that while the bill requires a performance bond for installation, it does not address a maintenance or removal bond if an operator or host goes out of business, leaving abandoned equipment in the right-of-way.
- The bill does not specify who pays for required signage, pavement markings, or long-term upkeep, which would need to be addressed through licensing and permitting agreements.
- Mr. Mezer noted that the bill lacks clear requirements for interoperability, payment methods, outage reporting, and customer support, potentially creating an inconsistent experience for users.

- He said that with no requirements included for cybersecurity, minimum charging power levels, or standardized connectors, this would leave key technical decisions to operators or local authorities.

Senator McConkey asked for clarification if businesses would be providing power for the EV chargers.

Mr. Mezer explained that the system could be powered by a public utility source, solar generation, or a direct grid connection.

Senator McConkey asked whether the Department of Transportation has precedent for allowing private commercial use in public rights-of-way through its' contracts.

Commissioner Rodriguez explained that this is not a model used in other DOT contracts. The concept involves private charging providers partnering with adjacent businesses or property owners to use their utilities and share revenue.

Senator McConkey asked whether the right-of-use model described is commonly used for other purposes. Commissioner Rodriguez explained that the right of use agreements are infrequent.

V.H

Date Hearing Report completed: January 23, 2026