

Senate Transportation Committee

Vivian Hall 271-3091

HB 1594-FN, establishing a weight-based tiered registration fee schedule for electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles.

Hearing Date: April 21, 2026

Time Opened: 2:25 p.m.

Time Closed: 2:34 p.m.

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

Members of the Committee Absent : Senator Prentiss

Bill Analysis: This bill changes the annual registration fees for electric vehicles from a flat fee to one based on type and weight.

Sponsors:

Rep. Bridle

Rep. Coker

Rep. Miller

Who supports the bill: Representative Seth Miller, Strafford District 21; Sarah Burke Cohen, New Hampshire Municipal Association; Cory Stone; and Cindy Kudlik.

Who opposes the bill: None.

Who is neutral on the bill: Jennifer O'Leary, Division of Motor Vehicles.

Summary of testimony presented:

Representative Seth Miller, Strafford District 21

- Rep. Seth Miller explained that the bill aimed to improve proportionality and fairness in registration fees for small electric vehicles.
- He stated that when electric vehicles were first introduced in New Hampshire, a flat \$100 registration fee was established to offset lost gas tax revenue, which made sense for full-size vehicles used as daily drivers.
- He said that this approach was unreasonable for smaller, lighter vehicles such as electric mopeds, motorcycles, and neighborhood electric vehicles that are driven less frequently and cause less road wear.
- He described how the bill replaced the flat fee with a tiered system based on gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR), following input from the Department of Motor Vehicles to simplify implementation.

- Under this system, he said the lightest vehicles would incur no additional fee, mid-weight vehicles would pay a reduced amount, and standard passenger EVs would remain similar to the current rate.
- He added that heavier vehicles would pay slightly more to reflect their greater impact on road maintenance, emphasizing that the structure better aligned costs with vehicle use and road impact.

Sen. Fenton asked if there is any fear that we are tying our hands with these lighter weight EVs if the fees are determined by weight.

Rep. Miller said he did not believe a weight-based system would tie the state's hands, noting that heavier vehicles cause more damage and would have purchased more gas. He said he did not expect the state to come up short on revenue, even if some vehicles were engineered to fall just below certain thresholds. He explained that while the state could have tried to base fees on vehicle type, those definitions can be difficult and quickly become outdated. He referenced prior hearings where defining "other class vehicles," such as small or unconventional devices, created confusion over what should be registered or allowed on the roads. He said that approach would likely create similar problems here, and that using weight was the most practical solution.

Sen. Fenton followed up about the other class vehicles.

Rep. Miller explained that defining fees by vehicle type would be difficult due to the wide range of unconventional and emerging vehicles, many of which fall into unclear regulatory categories. He noted that past efforts to classify such vehicles led to confusion over registration and road use. He said the state is working to improve those definitions, but in the meantime, a weight-based system was the most practical approach because it better aligns with road impact and revenue needs.

Sen. McConkey asked if, during the previous House testimony, if he or the Division of Motor Vehicles came up with what they had registered. One time system charges 45,000 dollars. He asked if the state would gain that much more revenue if that were to happen.

Rep. Miller said the original fiscal note was how we originally defined the weight. They made it much more reasonable to do. He said while it costs money to change things, it is the right thing to do.

Jennifer O'Leary, Division of Motor Vehicles

Sen. McConkey asked if we present electric vehicle charge a registration fee, if this fee would be on top of the other fee that is being charged.

Ms. O'Leary stated that the bill created a more equitable, weight-based fee structure, replacing the flat \$100 fee that had charged small electric vehicles the same as larger ones. She said the change would better align fees with vehicle use while still addressing lost gas tax revenue. She also explained that the fiscal note reflected the technical and administrative costs of updating multiple systems and distributing the revenue through state channels

Sen. McConkey said he didn't realize all EV's were being charged a registration fee.

Ms. O'Leary explained the fee structure.

Sen. McConkey raised concerns about fairness and consistency in how electric vehicles are charged fees.

Ms. O'Leary said they are not involved in how those calculations were deemed. They are only the catalyst for collecting and allocating funds.

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Date Hearing Report completed: April 24, 2026