

Alaska Energy Authority Alaska Electric Vehicle Working Group

January Technical Session and Combined Working Group Meeting

Date & Time:	January 19, 2023, 11:30 am – 1:00 pm	
Held in person and on ZOOM:	AEA Office, 813 W Northern Lights Blvd, Anchorage, AK https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88482460494?pwd=aJmN2d4OEpBL3JsMIQrcmhRUDJ2UT09 Meeting ID: 884 8246 0494 Passcode: 658547	
Presenters:	Josi Hartley Taylor Asher Jeff Kupko	Alaska Energy Authority Alaska Energy Authority Michael Baker International

Meeting Summary

INTRODUCTIONS – JOSI HARTLEY, PROJECT MANAGER AEA

RFA PRESENTATION – AEA

Josi Hartley and Jeff Kupko gave a presentation on the upcoming request for applications (RFA) anticipated timeline and evaluation and scoring criteria. Taylor Asher provided an update on charging stations that have been built using Volkswagen settlement funds.

Q&A

Question from Josh Craft: How are we going to deal with the existing infrastructure? Will any of that infrastructure or investment be eligible for the matching requirements of the NEVI program?

Answer from AEA: Funds that were expended prior to the grant and funding being in place are not eligible project costs per NEVI program requirements.

Follow up question from Josh Craft: So, all the make ready costs and everything that has already been invested can't be reused?

Answer from AEA: At this point, we've been given indications that they will not be eligible for reimbursement, or they will not count toward project costs for these grant agreements. We will follow up with the Joint Office.

Question from Josh Craft: Would the Volkswagen settlement chargers, if they're replaced, no longer be required to report their data? Or if those chargers had to stay in place and there's now six chargers at some locations, how would AEA want to handle that?

Answer from AEA: We'll have to ask the Volkswagen trustee, because they have their own set of requirements. For how long the stations must be operational, that probably is a decision that they will make rather than us. Whether or not the sites could be moved, that's a reasonable request, and I think a case could be made to the trustee to explain that, so that's something we'll follow up on.

Question in the chat from Denise: Can you talk about the anticipated timeframe for phase two?

Answer from AEA: The plan is to first build out the alternative fuel corridor (AFC) in the first year of implementation. This is still our plan, however we have yet to see how much interest we have along the AFC from site hosts. It really depends on what happens with this RFA. If we're able to grant to all the Priority Sites and fulfill the requirements of the NEVI program, then we would like to move forward with phase two for our next year of funding. But it is all subject to how it goes this year with the build out of the AFC, because that is a requirement to be done first. We also must make sure that before we move onto phase two that we get agreement from the Joint Office that our AFC is built out. We don't quite know if according to the Joint Office everything must be constructed, commissioned, and operational, or if they can be in the middle of construction for us to move on. Prior to being able to build phase two, we would need that authorization from the Joint Office saying that they agree that the AFC is effectively built out.

Question in the chat from Tim Leach: To Jeff – in the summary of the proposed rulemaking you mentioned that connector types need to be permanent and not reliant on an adapter that is temporarily attached. It sounds like this may prevent the use of Tesla's North American Charging Standard, which I believe uses an adapter. Do you have additional information on this?

Answer from Jeff Kupko: I believe Tesla's move with basically opening their adapter as a standard and making it open source and not proprietary may potentially mean it is available for some of the funding. I haven't seen anybody comment on that, because at this point it's still largely applicable to one vehicle type and not multiple vehicle types. I've also seen, these are rumored things so certainly not to say that it's confirmed, some rumored designs of how they might be incorporating a CCS and it looks like an adapter, but it may also be permanently attached in the way that it brings the connector from the station out. Again, without seeing a final design, I don't know that there's a really good answer there, but my hunch is that Tesla would probably not be available in the first year one round, but maybe in the future that could be an option.

Question in the chat from Jackson Fox: What is the approximate lead time for ordering and delivery of EV charging station equipment to Alaska with all the competing purchases nationwide?

Answer from Jeff Kupko: One aspect that is still unknown now is the final Buy America waivers and which equipment applies. One of the things I didn't really touch on is they did ask about what date would qualify when they say, "beginning January first" or "July first," and how does that relate to the equipment – it's currently identified as install date. I think every station out there is going to have to wait – I think the expectation is that no one is going to be installing stations this year – could be due to manufacturing, or the dates the funding is encumbered. That was an answer to an outstanding question, and I think that might have an impact on some of the equipment that's available. So, something that was manufactured in November still might be okay, but if it's dependent on the installation date, I think it'll be a different story, and that it will ultimately come down to the equipment manufacturers and their potential supply chain and assembly alterations to meet the requirements.

Answer from the Kris Hall: We buy from Tridium Machines who used to make for ChargePoint until ChargePoint started building their own, and for Blink and Siemens. We placed an order in October of last year for our equipment, and it was delivered to us in November of this year, so that was one year, pre-NEVI EVSE development. They are currently in the process of building out, if they haven't already, a manufacturing line in Tennessee to increase their ability to develop some of these NEVI specific equipment. I would suggest that an order is at least 52 weeks of wait time. That doesn't include some of the other ancillary equipment. The equipment like the transformers is sometimes up to 200 weeks. It's not something that's fast unless you've already got relationships built in place and are utilizing them. Even if you're talking about having the waiver apply to the bill date rather than the install date – ours was built and then shipped to us a week later. It's not even like they had it built and there was an issue with the shipping, it was manufactured and a week later if was in Alaska, so that's where the delay is. It's all in the manufacturer and how fast they can get it built out. That plant in Tennessee has two sections, one that's building 75 kilowatt machines that aren't NEVI compliant, and 150 kilowatt machines that is still not fully operational. It's probably going to be a year, maybe longer.

Answer from Thomas Koetje, audience member: I work for Flo. Of course, we previously manufactured all our equipment in Canada, but we just opened an assembly line in Auburn Hills, Michigan. We're rolling out NEVI compliant chargers with cold climates in mind, rated to four 150 kilowatts per port and we do expect to continue to support shorter lead time. Our typical lead times right now for DC chargers made in North America are about 16 to 24 weeks, so typically shorter than transformer wait time.

Question in the chat from Jackson Fox: Have there been any requests to the legislature or Governor's office to assist with covering part of the 20% match? At \$1 million per NEVI compliant charging station, I think it would be very difficult for rural host sites along the Parks Highway to come up with \$200,000 in match.

Answer from AEA: That is a valid point and something we've brought up in the past. However, it wasn't in the Governor's budget this year, and it's not really something that's within our

control at this agency. We'll have to see what happens as time goes on, but as of now, there's no indication that the 20% match is going to be covered by state funds.

Question from Josh Craft: A point of clarification on the 600-kilowatt minimum – we can't do any sharing amongst them to use a 500-kilowatt transformer and do 125 kilowatts a piece?

Answer from AEA: This was a question that we submitted to the joint office, but I don't believe we directly received a firm answer. However, based on interpretation of the notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) that's not within scope as what has been defined in the NPRM. I think if we were to really pursue doing something like that, we would need to be asking for an exception.

Follow up answer by Jeff Kupko: I wrote a response to the NPRM from Michael Baker, and I know several other states also had a similar question. We put in our report that the chances of four vehicles plugging in simultaneously and triggering it to 600 kilowatts is extremely rare. We did ask if that would be allowable, because a lot of sites may also have existing equipment that can handle it, or it might be easier to get the equipment that can handle doing that on a shorter timeline. So, while the draft rulemaking says that, maybe if enough people submitted that question, that could change the final rulemaking. But as of now, no.

Follow up from Josh Craft: I suggest that we should lean on them a little bit to at least get some resolution, because there are a lot of sites that installed 500 kilowatts thinking they were over installing at the time. 500 kilowatts gets you almost all the way there, and the chance of all four 150 kilowatt chargers being used at the same time is slim to none, unless there was a road rally or something, in which case I think they would be understanding. I think some resolution would be useful, because in a \$200,000 match, every penny counts, and if we don't have to change out a transformer that's pretty good.

Follow up from AEA: AEA did bring up that comment and it was included in the implementation plan, so the Joint Office is aware. We did respond to the notice of proposed rulemaking. To your point of resolution, we are expecting that the finalized rule making will be released hopefully toward the end of the month.

Question from the audience: I have a question about the contractual requirements for the up time and availability. Out of nine sites, four of them are up and online and five have been installed. One of them is offline. What are you guys going to have in place to hold people accountable for that 97% uptime?

Answer from AEA: That is something we've been working on. We know there have been a couple of working groups with other states, and everybody is trying to understand how they're going to meet the 97% uptime requirement. There have been different strategies thrown out, some states have gone as far as to say they would look at a liquidated damages approach. We're not saying we're doing that. Perhaps another approach could be to withhold some of the grant funds. It's difficult, but it's also something that's required under the program requirements, and we're going to have to figure out an effective way to enforce the NEVI

program requirements. It would be beneficial if we held another technical session to go over some of those questions to garner feedback from industry and developers.

Follow up to that answer from the same audience member: We're EV owners, we both drove our EVs here. If there's a site host that's been marked available and it's not available, that's worse than it being unavailable. At the end of the road right now, I guess they're having some issues with their machine and they're trying to work through it, and the charger at the Dimond Center is only about halfway working. And I get that we're in Alaska and we have different problems than other states entirely, we even have problems with our own equipment. But we strive hard to make sure that we're very vocal on what's happening in each location. When people show up and the machine is offline, that's a problem because maybe they now can't get home. That's a problem that needs to be very well communicated with everybody. People who are installing these stations should also be aware that yes, this is an extra service, but people might be reliant on that to get to home or get where they came from. I understand uptime, and I get the reason for uptime, but I recognize that it's not being enforced, and something needs to happen to build trust within the community.

Follow up answer from Jeff Kupko: I think an important omission from uptime right now is vandalism. Allow for vandalism to be an allowable downtime because that is certainly something that is out of the site's control.

Question from audience: To Jeff – you talked about the connectors that are necessary on each of the EVSEs. CHAdeMO is a dead connector in North America. I recognize that Juneau is different, there is a ton of CHAdeMO cars there, but in mainland Alaska maybe not so much. I don't know if CHAdeMO was necessary to be part of the NEVI requirements. I don't know if there is a way that maybe it could only be one of the four machines?

Answer from Jeff Kupko: I agree with that. I don't think we would say all four stations would need to have that access. I think if you did all four stations and one of them was a dual port, you're providing that station with CHAdeMO for EVs like the Nissan Leaf, which obviously in Alaska there are a lot of depending on where you are. That would be extra points, it doesn't need to be all four stations.

Question from audience: You talk about a permanently attached system. At our stations we provide a channel adapter which is just on a sling, so it doesn't walk off with users. Tesla now has the CCS adapter that they provide. If we were to permanently attach that by mechanical means, like bolt it on in a way that does meet intent, would that be okay? It's very hard, if not impossible to find a Tesla cord anywhere that's not a black-market type of situation.

Answer form Jeff Kupko: I don't think the NPRM necessarily goes into that detail. I have the language in front of me – they say, “may include a permanently attached connector.” To your point of defining permanently attached – if you put a chain around it so it isn't going to walk off, then I think we could probably get away with that. Maybe that's a question for the Joint Office and FHWA. It's not that the adapter is something that you ask to borrow from inside the

store, which we know is not an allowable expense, but if the adapter is steal proof and attached, then that might be okay.

Question from audience: Can we get an update for the VW settlement funds? What's happening? I get snippets of information when I talk to people every now and then, but that needs to be given out to the community, A lot of people have questions on what is going to be happening on the Three Bears sites. Maybe it would be good if that information was dispensed at each quarterly meeting.

Answer from AEA: That is on the agenda for later.

Question from the chat: The VW settlement projects had an approved list of EVSE suppliers, will this RFA also be identifying approved EVSE suppliers to improve functionality and support maintenance?

Answer from AEA: We are not going to be providing a list of approved suppliers for this solicitation.

Question from the chat: Will this RFA require applicants to provide a 4–5-year maintenance package for equipment?

Answer from AEA: Yes, a 5-year operations and maintenance and warranty will be required as part of the grant agreement.

Question in chat from Tim Leach: Would a 600-kilowatt load in Denali State Park, Kesugi Ken area, be able to be added with existing infrastructure?

Answer from Josh Craft, Matanuska Electric Association: Yeah, I would say that we probably could supply an additional 600 kilowatts because it's a highly seasonal load. The problem with Kesugi Ken has always been that you can't access the upper portion year-round. So, you'd have to install everything down at the lower lot, and there is absolutely nothing there except the lower lot. And the Denali View South parking lot is closed 8-9 months of the year, so your best bet might be Trapper Creek.

Follow up from Tim Leach: If the parking area and utility upgrades are non-eligible or ineligible costs, but that site has some unique requirements that do force that into the budget, that might go back to a request for appropriation or working with the Governor's office, and maybe that's something AEA could help with.

Question from Tim Leach: A follow up on the earlier question about the timing of phase two – there was something that said that after the submission by states, the following year was when the Joint Office would review and approval. Do you recall something like that in terms of when that approval versus when the submission would have been?

Answer from Jeff Kupko: I think they had said that no states would receive complete status in year one. I don't know if that was a recognition that nobody had all their AFCs built out, or if they just weren't going to do it. Every state is going to need to install infrastructure to be fully complete, so I think that language was in there. They said they wouldn't do it in year one, but I think most states are going to be in at least year two if not year three.

Question from the chat: Are there any requirements or suggestions concerning the design of pull through charging stations?

Answer from AEA: Yes, in our evaluation criteria for site specific considerations we are offering bonus points for pull through stations. I think that would be the preference for most folks.

Follow up answer from Jeff Kupko: In the appendix of The [Plan](#), we have some generic layouts. They're not fully designed engineering drawings, but we do depict some pull through stations. They're more for inspiration than anything.

Question from audience: When will the draft RFA be on the website?

Answer from AEA: We've asked for DOT&PF's comments by the end of the month, so probably the beginning of February we'll send that out to the group. We'll send a notification out to the group that it's available.

Question from AEA to audience: We said that 45 days was the length of time for our RFA, is that adequate?

Answer from audience: No. If you want it to be detailed probably not. If you're looking for a lot of assumptions 45 days would be enough time. The April timeframe is when all the construction activities are kicking off, so none of our engineers are available to work through quotes. So, if you want very rough estimates, and very rough costs, that's what you'll get.

Follow up question from AEA to audience: Is 60 days better?

Answer from audience: You're getting closer.

Follow up from AEA: Our timing is set up to be aligned with when we need to submit our second draft of the plan, so that's why the timing is how it is. March 1 is the latest we can release the RFA without butting up against our schedule for the plan.

Follow up from audience: Is there any way you could move up the release?

Follow up from AEA: There are things that we could do to try to condense the review process to save time there.

Question from audience: If you put out a preliminary RFA then those sites could take it to the utilities early.

Answer from AEA: That is the intent with what we're trying to accomplish by putting stuff on the website early, but our hands are tied to some extent with the approvals that are necessary.

Question from audience: It might be advantageous for the utilities to start putting together plans that include every 10 miles, to see what you have for substations and power availability.

Answer from Josh Craft, Matanuska Electric Association: It's going to be site specific, that's not every 10 miles. A Three Bears is going to have three phase service, but a mom-and-pop shop on the side of the road may or may not have single phase. I can't tell them within that 10-mile range who's got \$200,000 and is going to apply.

Question from audience: Are there any remaining Volkswagen funds that could be used for matching funds?

Answer from AEA: Not really, no.

Follow up from audience: I thought there was at least a couple hundred thousand out there that I heard is going to Southeast.

Follow up from Tim Leach: Could some of those funds for Southeast be timed so that they funds are a match for NEVI projects?

Answer from AEA: Theoretically they could be timed to be used as match for Southeast NEVI projects, but when we spoke to Southeast, they indicated that they want the funds and want to be able to spend them now, and not wait because we're unsure about the timing of when the AFC will be built out. Theoretically Southeast could hold onto the funds and use them as match, but that's up to them, not us.