

## REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI) from the Florida Dept. of Transportation

This RFI is being issued by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to solicit feedback and recommendations for the planning, coordination, and development of electric vehicle charging infrastructure within the State of Florida. The FDOT is currently developing a *Statewide EV Infrastructure Deployment Plan*, which is in response to the recent The National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Formula Program Guidance authorized under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). As such, the purpose of this RFI is to collect input from potential market participants across varying sectors to obtain information on how to best support the deployment for direct current fast charge (DCFC) electric vehicle supply equipment (EVSE).

### Background

According to Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) guidance for the NEVI formula program under the BIL, Florida can expect to receive \$198 million in federal funding between 2022-2026. While formula funds are essentially guaranteed for each state, the BIL requires each state DOT to submit an EV Infrastructure Deployment Plan which details how the NEVI formula funds will be utilized consistent with FHWA guidance on developing charging networks along designated alternative fuel corridors (AFC's). Responses from this RFI will be used to inform FDOT's *Statewide EV Infrastructure Deployment Plan* as well as future competitive solicitations.

Respondents are requested to not provide proposals or marketing material and should instead focus on providing detailed answers to the questions in this RFI. Respondents may also choose to abstain from answering questions that may not be relevant to them. Furthermore, the purpose of this RFI is for information-gathering purposes only; FDOT will not select a vendor for DCFC EVSE deployment based on responses to this RFI. No contracts will result from this RFI.

### Information Requested:

#### General

1. Please describe your organization's involvement and experience with DCFC infrastructure. What are your long-term EV plans? How many chargers and/or charging stations are you able to build, install, and/or maintain on an annual basis? *We currently have two locations that provide DCFC services; both locations are Tesla branded. One is in Live Oak at the intersection of I-10 and US-129, and the other is in Panama City Beach at the corner of Nautilus Street and Back Beach Road. Our long-term plans are to continue our partnership with Tesla where it makes sense to do so. The number of chargers we can build depends on several factors such as demand, supply, and the ability to make a return on our investment.*
  2. Where does your organization see the biggest opportunities for the utilization of NEVI funds? This could be in terms of innovative technology solutions, partnerships, and/or targeting geographic locations. *We believe the partnerships and locations should be with existing retail fueling locations. The market determines where the need to refuel vehicles exist. It doesn't make a difference if you are fueling with gas or electricity, the demand will still be in the same locations. Clearly from a consumer perspective, the greater the variety of amenities provided the more appeal. This is especially true with the time factor involved with EV chargers therefore travel centers are a natural fit for EV charging stations.*
- What are the biggest challenges or barriers that should be addressed to expedite reaching the goals of the NEVI program? *There are many challenges, but we believe the biggest challenges*

are infrastructure (insufficient grid) and the ability to make a return on investment. If the grid is in place and companies can make a profit, the rest will follow. The investment of our travel centers is a tremendous amount. The retailer has to have the opportunity to recoup the investment they have made in their business. The EV consumer will be on site for an extended period of time- whereas an average fuel fill up is 4-6 minutes depending on tank size and level, the EV charge is typically 29-39 minutes at a supercharger site. This is an incredible amount of time and will take a ton of parking spots that will not turn as frequently as traditional consumers. Traditionally, we targeted Tesla drivers because of their average income level and disposable income. Our travel centers have been a perfect fit for EV stops for time factors as well as providing many different products for the consumers.

### **Site Location**

3. Please describe what you believe makes an ideal DCFC location including amenities as well as any risk factors that should be considered. How would you rank the relative importance of these factors? We believe location is the top priority. Well-known and easily accessible EV charging stations will encourage travel away from home and regularly used local charging stations. Reliable EV charging access when travelling will bolster consumer confidence to purchase electric vehicles. Additionally, travel centers may provide people with amenities while charging including more plentiful food and drink options, clean restrooms, and a safe environment to socialize, read or work. Other factors to consider are: 1) Location, 2) Travel Center Amenities, 3) Super Charger/Rapid Charger, and 4) Developing a Universal Charger for all EV's.
4. Please describe your process, including market research, land use requirements, and business development opportunities for determining a DCFC site location. NA

6. What do you think the DCFC site of the future looks like? Will location to amenities be as important or will micromobility be used to get to the amenities? What innovations/disrupters are coming? We believe that the future DCFC site will look very much like the existing retail fueling sites, except that there will be a large parking area with chargers under a canopy. Just as our business is adapting and ever changing, adaptation is key. EV will adapt with charging more rapidly, more efficient batteries, and possibly one universal adaptor. People want choices while traveling and since time is a factor with EV, it's imperative to offer as many selections and services as possible.

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### **Partnerships and Business Models**

7. Please explain any previous partnerships regarding EV infrastructure your organization has had including which parties initiated the outreach and what, if any, contracting mechanisms were used. These should include public and private entities as well as utility owners. The only partnership we have entered is with Tesla, which we initiated. We believed that Tesla was the most reliable provider in the industry.

8. Describe what makes a successful business model and partnership. Also, please describe threats that can lead to a business and partnership's failure. These can be examples from current and/or previous partnerships. *Any successful business model and partnership needs to be fair for both sides while allowing both sides to make a profit. One example is Tesla's maintenance program. If there is any issues with the equipment we contact Tesla using number they provide and they fix any issues within 24 hours!*
9. Please provide your organization's viewpoints on contracting methods for DCFC infrastructure, including leasing and/or revenue sharing agreements. Have you implemented any cost/revenue sharing models for the operation of DCFC EVSE? If yes, please share what you can about the terms of those partnerships. *All we would like is an opportunity to fairly compete. We have the travel centers in place with the people – we have built a culture of providing guests with excellence on every level, but we have to have a level playing ground to compete. With the EV guest we have an extended period of time that we have a “captive audience.” We have huge infrastructure costs and risks and understand the consumer. We would just appreciate the opportunity to have a true shot at it.*
10. Does Florida have the workforce required to operate and maintain DCFC EVSE charging sites? If not, please describe what you think is required to develop it. *I believe just like our Gilbarco MPD's we have in house people who do work on our equipment that keep everything working smoothly. If they are unable to get everything perfectly, we have industry technicians we utilize.*

### **Equipment**

11. On average, how long does it take to install a DCFC from start to finish? This includes site determination, design, permitting, site preparation, utilities, and installation. *I can comment on our existing two sites. One was done after the building was already built and the other one was designed in the plans. Both of the projects were completed six (6) months from breaking ground.*
12. Are you currently able to meet the requirements of Buy America for DCFC infrastructure projects? If not, please explain your plans to meet the requirements and any potential issues. *We believe we can meet the Buy American requirements and our legal counsel can confirm.*
13. Are there any components required for DCFC infrastructure that are in short supply that could delay the goals of the NEVI program? Please describe what steps you have taken or what processes you have implemented to ensure the continuity of your supply chain. *In our current partnership, Tesla does not seem to have any issues acquiring necessary equipment.*
14. Please describe how your organization mitigates cybersecurity vulnerabilities. Is this consistent with industry standards? If not, where are the differences? Do you follow national cybersecurity standards including National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Cybersecurity Framework? Do you comply with Florida's 60GG-2 for ensuring the security of your infrastructure? What other technologies do you offer for an end-to-end secured operation? *We employ a company that manages all our cybersecurity, and our vendor can confirm any specific compliance.*

## **Operation, Maintenance and Data Sharing**

15. What are your current or planned fee structures (time-based, energy-based, power-based, etc.) and what payment mechanism do you accept? Please explain any issues you have encountered or identified. [Currently, we use a POS system by Gilbarco called Passport, as well as utilizing Square. We accept all payment types.](#)
16. Describe the typical maintenance for your organization's EVSE infrastructure as well as the maintenance schedule including any required hardware and software updates. Please include the typical lifecycle for your DCFC and what performance measurements are monitored. [Maintenance and updates are provided directly by Tesla.](#)

17. How would your EVSE share data to a FDOT sponsored central data repository? What type(s) of data can you provide? [Our vendor, Tesla, is better suited to respond to this question. Our Tesla representative is Tiffany Foxx at \[Tfoxx@tesla.com\]\(mailto:Tfoxx@tesla.com\).](#)
18. What should FDOT do to ensure the end-users of EVSE infrastructure have the most convenient and reliable charging experience? Please include how emergency evacuations and power outages should be addressed. [We think that convenience will be heavily influenced by location and amenities. Reliability will be affected by the quality of the equipment and the maintenance in place as well as the electric supply. We think large scale emergency evacuations will be a problem. As you know, even with the existing retail fueling infrastructure that is in place, a large-scale emergency evacuation has proven to be extremely difficult. We feel the greatest issue is time of charging and rural areas being covered. Our stand-by generators that can power the entire store are using a diesel engine like you would find in a semi-truck, and each can power a few electric charging stations.](#)

## **Strategies for Low Utilization**

19. FDOT is looking to provide DCFC in rural and disadvantaged communities that may have a lower return on investment and is interested in how to make these projects more desirable to potential applications. What strategies can FDOT utilize to encourage deployment of DCFC EVSE into rural, underserved, or disadvantaged communities? When answering please include information on driving factors.
- Guaranteed number of projects for economies of scale
  - Short term operation and maintenance agreements (5 years or less)
  - Long term operation and maintenance agreements (longer than 5 years)

Any others? N/A20. To increase utilization rates to rural, underserved, or disadvantages communities what considerations or innovation solutions should be considered? We have built our business from the beginning in rural areas around Florida! We understand these areas and believe we don't have to reinvent the wheel!! [Lucas – anything to answer specifically here, even to mention Busy Bee locations already in rural/underserved areas?]

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## **Specific Information Requested**

Interested vendors may respond to some or all the following topics, based on their proposed role in the creation of a DCFC EVSE network:

1. *Summary of Experience* [NA – Not a vendor](#).

FDOT is interested in a summary that describes your organization's experience with DCFC EVSE.

2. *System Block Diagram*

FDOT is interested in a high-level system block diagram that illustrates all components and connections required to create the proposed system.

3. *Hardware Information*

FDOT is interested in datasheets and technical specifications for components included and required to create a typical DCFC system.

4. *Software Information*

FDOT is interested in information on software components included and needed to create a typical DCFC system.

5. *Maintenance Plan*

FDOT is interested to know about the maintenance services and typical maintenance schedule for DCFC infrastructure.

## 6. Project Approach

FDOT is interested in the approach that your organization would take to deliver the DCFC EVSE.

The Department may exercise the choice to invite each vendor that responds to the questions above to meet and discuss the information provided in more detail.

Please Email Responses to: [Co.Purch@dot.state.fl.us](mailto:Co.Purch@dot.state.fl.us)

Subject Line: DOT-RFI-22-9114-PB

Please note there is a 25MB limit on emails received by the Department.

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**Please provide one copy of the response to this RFI on a non-returnable flash drive.**

### **Contact for Questions or clarification:**

Please email Paul Baker at [co.purch@dot.state.fl.us](mailto:co.purch@dot.state.fl.us) with any questions or comments

**The requested information must be received by 5:00 pm (EST) on June 28, 2022.**

Send to: The Department of Transportation

Attention: Paul Baker

Subject: DCFC EVSE

Mailing Address: 605 Suwannee Street, MS20, Tallahassee, FL 32399

### PLEASE NOTE:

- 1) Responses to this Request for Information (RFI) will be reviewed by the agency for informational purposes and will not be considered as offers to be accepted by the agency to form a binding contract.
- 2) The Department may contact respondents that respond to the questions to discuss product information in further detail.
- 3) Information obtained in response to this RFI is public record as defined by Chapter 119, Florida Statutes (F.S.).
- 4) In accordance with Section 287.057, F.S., information obtained in response to this RFI may be used to develop scope and solicitation documents for future procurements at the discretion of the Department. Respondents eligible to respond to this RFI will remain eligible for any subsequent related contract with the agency.
- 5) Advertisement of any subsequent competitive solicitation that may result from this RFI will be posted on the Florida Vendor Bid System.

If the responses to this RFI are subject to non-disclosure, then the Proposer must include any materials it asserts to be exempted from the public disclosure under Chapter 119, Florida Statutes, in a separate bound document labeled "Confidential Materials". The proposer must identify the specific Statute that authorizes exemption from the Public Records Law. Any claim to confidentiality on materials the Proposer asserts to be exempt from public disclosure and placed elsewhere in the proposal will be considered waived by the Proposer upon submission, effective after opening.