

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?

Response:

The Florida Electric Cooperatives Association (FECA) represents the collective interests of 17 electric cooperatives operating in Florida. FECA's member-systems include 15 electric distribution cooperatives and 2 generation and transmission cooperatives (G&T cooperatives). In May, Seminole Electric Cooperative, Inc. and PowerSouth Energy Cooperative, the 2 G&T cooperatives who provide power to FECA's distribution cooperatives, submitted comment letters to FDOT (attached) advising them that Florida's electric cooperatives are co-located within many of the designated "Ready," "Pending," and "Proposed Pending" Alternative Fuel Corridors.

FECA's member-cooperatives are committed to the communities they serve. These communities are located in some of the fastest growing regions in Florida, however, some

of these communities also represent the most economically disadvantaged areas in the state.

For the reasons given above, FECA's member-cooperatives believe it will be mutually beneficial to work closely with FDOT and other EV partners to ensure that locations and projects selected for EV charging infrastructure funds are developed as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible, in ways that minimize costs associated with grid enhancements, and to locations that can economically benefit from the siting of EV charging stations. To the greatest extent possible, we would ask FDOT to facilitate communications between fund recipients and the electric utilities that provide services to areas where recipients intend to install new charging infrastructure. This will provide an opportunity for electric providers to, where possible, facilitate mutually beneficial installations that limit any burdens on existing infrastructure.

FECA and its member-cooperatives will continue to work with FDOT through the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Funding Program process and provide input to the agency as needed.

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.

Response:

The electric cooperative program is one of the most successful public-private partnerships in our nation's history. When the problem of rural electrification needed to be solved, we looked to communities to create, own, operate, and oversee their own electric utilities. This approach finally ensured that every address, no matter how rural, had the opportunity to receive electricity.

In the same way today, the electric cooperative program can be utilized to bring charging infrastructure to underserved areas in our state. There are locations that need infrastructure to eliminate range anxiety, provide for evacuation routes, and allow for economic and community development. These locations may never be attractive for private investment, however, electric cooperatives, working with the state of Florida, and electric vehicle charging infrastructure installers, could help fill in the gaps. We welcome the opportunity to participate fully in this process, either as individual organizations, or collectively through our industry trade association.

Electric cooperatives have a history of being responsible stewards of public funding. We use public funding from time to time in the form of loans and grants, and we also borrow, and repay with interest, billions of dollars from the United States Federal Financing Bank through the USDA Rural Development Program. Electric cooperatives are also not-for-profit, and we will use any funds we receive entirely for the benefit of our member-consumers, and the communities that we serve.

3. What are the biggest challenges or barriers that should be addressed to expedite reaching the goals of the NEVI program?

Response:

We would caution the department from following a process that allows for a handful of vendors to receive the vast majority of funding along the corridors. We have seen with previous programs where this resulted in sites receiving funding that were not thoroughly vetted. For example, there were some sites awarded in the VW mitigation process where the location owner was unaware of the award, and unwilling to participate in the program. Including local utility stakeholders in the evaluation process for deploying resources could help with this problem.

Site Location

4. 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?
5. Please describe your process, including market research, land use requirements, and business development opportunities for determining a DCFC site location.
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?

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.
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.
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.
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.

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.
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.
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.

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?

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.
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.
17. How would your EVSE share data to a FDOT sponsored central data repository? What type(s) of data can you provide?
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.

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.
- a. Guaranteed number of projects for economies of scale
 - b. Short term operation and maintenance agreements (5 years or less)
 - c. Long term operation and maintenance agreements (longer than 5 years)
 - d. Any others?
20. To increase utilization rates to rural, underserved, or disadvantages communities what considerations or innovation solutions should be considered?

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

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

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 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.



May 27, 2022

April Combs
Florida Department of Transportation
605 Suwannee St.
Tallahassee, FL 32399

RE: Florida Department of Transportation's Electric Vehicle (EV) Infrastructure Funding Program

Ms. Combs,

Seminole Electric Cooperative is a not-for-profit generation and transmission (G&T) electric cooperative. Seminole provides reliable, competitively-priced, wholesale electric power to our nine Member distribution electric cooperatives. Approximately 1.9 million people and businesses in parts of 42 Florida counties rely on Seminole's Member cooperatives for electricity. Seminole is led by an experienced management group which is governed by a 27-member Board of Trustees. The Board is composed of three representatives from each Member cooperative.

A map of Seminole's Members' service territory is attached below as "Exhibit A."

As part of our Members' commitment to their communities, we appreciate the opportunity to contribute input as a stakeholder while the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) develops and establishes its EV Deployment Plan and Infrastructure Funding Program. Our Members represent both some of the fastest-growing regions in the state as well as some of the most economically disadvantaged areas in Florida. As such, our Members have seen the enthusiastic adoption of EVs in some of their service territories as well as many rural areas in the state that continue to be overlooked for EV infrastructure investments.

After review of the various materials that FDOT has provided to stakeholders, we would like to emphasize that our Members are co-located with many of the designated "Ready," "Pending," and "Proposed Pending" Alternative Fuel Corridors. For instance, three of our Members (Talquin Electric Cooperative, Suwannee Valley Electric Cooperative, and Tri-County Electric Cooperative) provide retail electric services to areas along the I-10 corridor that stretch from Tallahassee to near the greater-Jacksonville area. And our other six Members (Central Florida Electric Cooperative, Clay Electric Cooperative, Glades Electric Cooperative, Peace River Electric Cooperative, SECO Energy, and Withlacoochee River Electric Cooperative) all have

service territory footprints that contain disadvantaged communities and also have areas within different segments of the “Ready,” “Pending,” and “Proposed Pending” Alternative Fuel Corridors identified by FDOT.

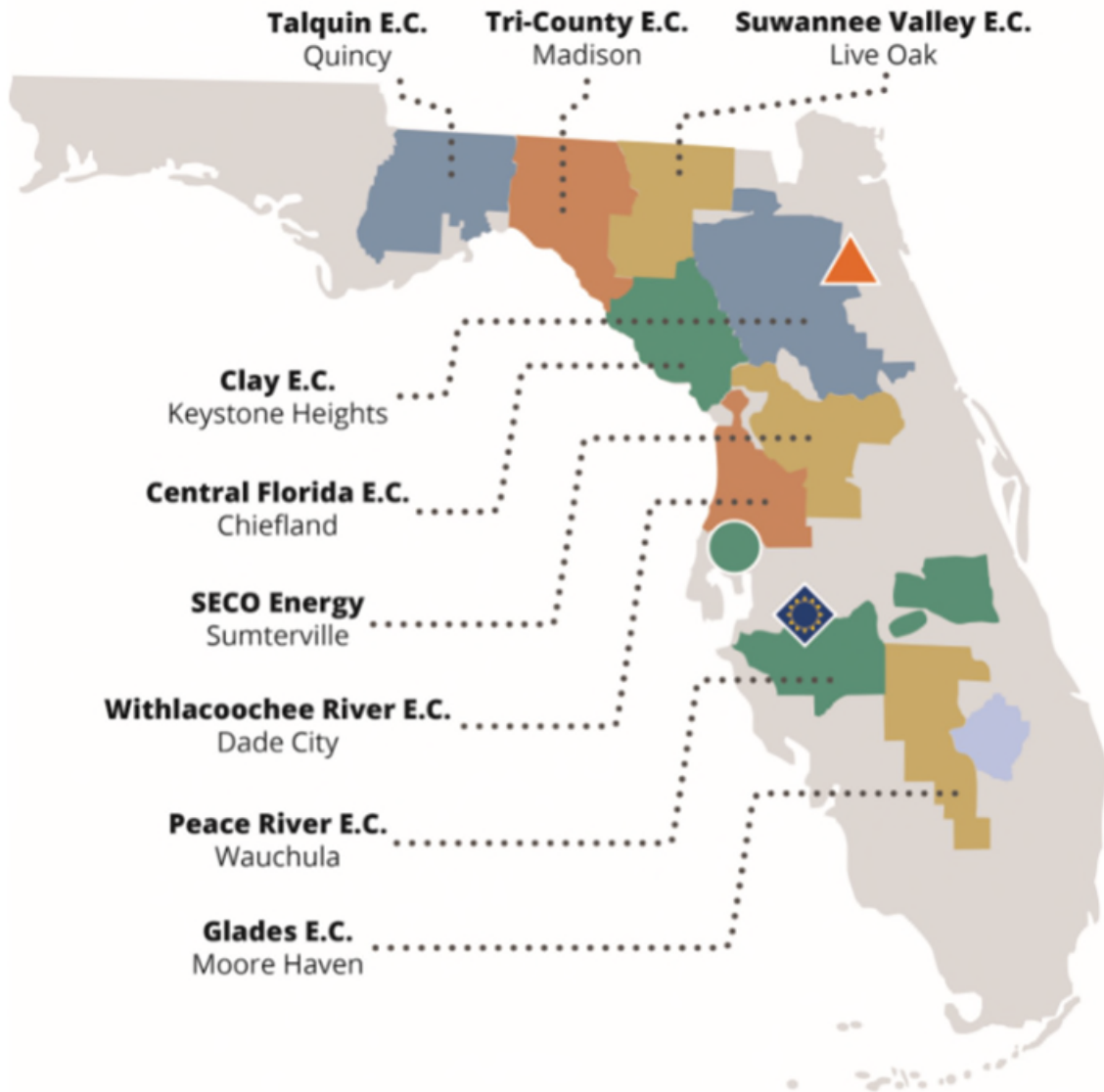
In areas such as these, our Members want to partner with FDOT and any other electric vehicle infrastructure vendors to ensure that locations selected for charging infrastructure funds and projects are developed as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible and in ways that minimize any costs that might be necessary with respect to grid enhancements. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions about our proximity to Alternative Fuel Corridors and anticipated infrastructure projects.




We look forward to working further with FDOT as it establishes its proposed Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Funding Program and hope that we can be a trusted resource to both the agency and any other entities that will be involved in implementing this exciting infrastructure program.

Sincerely,

Ryan Hart
Director of Communications & Energy Policy
Seminole Electric Cooperative, Inc.

SEMINOLE'S MEMBER COOPERATIVES



-  **Seminole Headquarters**
-  **Richard J. Midulla Generating Station /
Cooperative Solar**
-  **Seminole Generating Station /
Seminole Combined Cycle Facility**