



TO: Chairman Swearingen & Members, Assembly Committee on State Affairs

FROM: Craig Summerfield, Director of Environmental & Energy Policy

DATE: April 11, 2023

RE: WMC Support for Assembly Bill 141 & Assembly Bill 142, prohibiting government discrimination of motor vehicles or other devices based on energy source

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Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce (WMC) appreciates the opportunity to testify in strong support of Assembly Bill 141 and Assembly Bill 142. These bills prohibit a state agency or local government from banning a motor vehicle or other device based on the energy source. We especially appreciate Senator Tomczyk and Representatives Schutt and Green for bringing forward these important bills.

WMC is the largest general business association in Wisconsin, representing approximately 3,800 member companies of all sizes, and from every sector of the economy. Our membership includes Wisconsin manufacturers of small engines and outdoor power equipment. Since 1911, our mission has been to make Wisconsin the most competitive state in the nation to do business. This mission includes advocating for regulatory certainty and predictability for WMC member businesses.

Wisconsin manufacturers need the flexibility to be able to continue to produce and sell the affordable and reliable leaf blowers, lawn mowers, snow blowers, outboard motors, and many other products demanded by consumers. Unfortunately, the flexibility to use gas-powered engines in important consumer devices is increasingly under attack in other states. In addition, recent reports by Wisconsin state agencies raise questions as to whether state bureaucrats would consider restrictive government mandates here.

For example, consider the proposed transition to electric vehicles. Gov. Evers' 2022 Clean Energy Plan notes that "the percentage of electric vehicles is growing, though not at the levels required..." and includes a "goal to transition most vehicles to be EVs [electric vehicles] in the next two decades."<sup>1</sup> According to a 2022 analysis by the Wisconsin DOT, currently only 0.1% of registered vehicles in Wisconsin are electric. In addition, DOT estimates this number may increase to 14.7% of registered vehicles by 2040, and 31.0% in 2050, though it notes such "projections should be interpreted cautiously."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See State of Wisconsin Clean Energy Plan – Innovate Transportation, pgs. 136-147; <https://osce.wi.gov/Documents/SOW-CleanEnergyPlan2022.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> See Wisconsin DOT State Plan for Electric Vehicle Infrastructure – Table 3-3: Projected Wisconsin Electric Vehicle Registrations, pg. 3-37; <https://wisconsindot.gov/Documents/projects/WEVI-plan-final-22-0914.pdf>.

Given this projection by the Wisconsin DOT, it is unclear how the Evers' administration anticipates its vehicle electrification target can be achieved without aggressive new government mandates. This creates needless uncertainty for the overwhelming majority of Wisconsin businesses and consumers that continue to depend on gas-powered motor vehicles for transportation, goods and services.

This uncertainty is addressed by AB 141 and AB 142. The proposals simply ensure that the motor vehicles and products needed by businesses and consumers will not be disrupted by new regulations from a state agency or local government. They also ensure consumer access to the affordable and reliable cars, trucks, motorcycles, stoves, furnaces, water heaters, fireplaces, and many other products (in addition to the aforementioned products). Finally, they ensure that any transition to electric vehicles or other electric devices occurs due to consumer demand and not heavy-handed government mandates.

WMC urges Members of the Assembly Committee on State Affairs to vote in favor of AB 141 and AB 142. Thank you for your consideration. I am happy to answer any questions.