RE: Senate Bill 823 — Discounted EV Charging Payment Card Program — SUPPORT

Dear Honorable Committee Chair Bradford,

We, the undersigned, write to express our support for SB 823 (Smallwood-Cuevas), which would increase access to affordable electric vehicle (EV) charging for low- and moderate-income Californians.

Through programs initiated by SB 350, California's utilities incentivize clean car adoption by offering lower cost energy to customers with EVs. Unfortunately, these programs exclusively benefit those who have access to an EV charger where they live—generally, affluent residents in single-family homes. For most Californians, especially low- to moderate-income Californians and those who are renters or live in apartment or condominium complexes, installing an EV charger at home is often prohibitively expensive, practicably impossible, or both. These residents are all but forced to rely on public chargers, which can be significantly more expensive to use.

SB 823 will help solve this inequity by providing eligible customers with a Discounted EV Charging Payment Card that can be used at participating public charging stations to receive the same affordable rates that those with at-home chargers benefit from. Recent studies from Consumer Reports, the Union of Concerned Scientists, and UC Berkeley, among others, reveal that access to affordable EV charging is critical to ensuring equitable adoption across income and racial demographics. With 250,000 new public EV charging stations expected to come online between now and 2025, SB 823 will ensure that underserved communities can afford to use them.

Ensuring that California’s underserved communities are at the forefront of our state’s electric vehicle transition will pay environmental justice dividends as well. California's transportation sector is the
leading emitter not only of greenhouse gasses but also toxic air pollutants that harm heart and lung health and increase the risks of respiratory illnesses and premature death. Low-income communities of color are disproportionately impacted by this pollution as they are more likely to reside in closer proximity to highways and busy roads. Last year, an American Lung Association report found that widespread EV adoption could save 110,000 lives and generate $1.2 trillion in health benefits nationally.

We respectfully encourage you to cast an “aye” vote on SB 823 to increase accessibility to affordable public EV charging.

Sincerely, 

_Alphabetical list of signers_