

Ed Miliband MP
Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero
Department for Energy Security and Net Zero

By Email

04 October 2024

Dear Secretary of State,

As the CEO of ChargeUK, the representative body for the charging sector, I listened with interest to your interview on the Today programme this morning and have also read the letter from the SMMT to the Chancellor regarding the ZEV mandate.

Given that this week saw the charging sector hit another key milestone – 70,000 public chargers, meaning that we remain on track, as per the National Infrastructure Commission’s predictions, to hit 300,000 public chargers by 2030 – it was disappointing to hear charging described as one of two problems holding back the EV transition.

The charging sector understands the key role it plays in that transition, to provide convenient and affordable charging. And we are getting on with that job, committing £6bn of investment through to 2030. This investment is taking place ahead of demand – and I should stress, profitability – and is underpinned not by targets, but by the ZEV mandate, which is giving the sector confidence to invest.

That investment is bearing fruit. As outlined in our white paper ‘[Powering Ahead](#)’ from July this year – which draws on data from independent sources – the public charging network is growing 42% year on year, with one public charger being installed every 25 minutes. This, combined with c. 850,000 home and workplace chargers, means there is close to one charger for every EV today. If that exponential rate continues, the public network will grow quicker than the number of EVs coming onto our roads.

This is not just our analysis of the situation. Autotrader described public charging as a “bright spot” in the transition in its September ‘[Road to 2035 report](#)’. BVRLA – representing the rental and leasing sector – gave public charging a “[green light](#)” in July. Last week [EVA England](#), which represents EV drivers, said that two thirds of drivers think the public network has improved in the last 12 months. DfT’s own statistics show month after month that charging availability is not the key problem at the heart of the transition, even if perception of that reality continues to play a role.

Charging operators are also motivated to offer affordable charging because we know this is a key consideration in drivers’ decisions to switch. So again, it was disappointing to hear discussion of drivers being “ripped off”. A number of significant factors contribute to the cost of charging that sit outside charging operators’ control. VAT charged at 20% for public charging (vs 5% at home), standing charges for rapid charging that have risen by 1000% in the past 18 months, wholesale electricity prices that remain among the highest in the EU28, and the fact that charging networks operate

without the benefits of renewable electricity being included in the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation, unlike many of our European counterparts.

Last month the Department for Transport Minister Lillian Greenwood attended our drinks reception and told my members that “your industry is already committed to billions of pounds in charging

infrastructure investment by 2030 and that's a huge step. And this government will back you all the way."

We warmly welcomed that commitment from Government. Backing us means a ZEV mandate that remains strong, to underpin the billions we are investing ahead of demand. It means a thriving EV market, with the current incentives that help drivers to make the switch to EVs continued or expanded. It means actions to remove delivery barriers and steps to address costs outside our control, so we can further accelerate rollout and ensure charging remains as affordable as possible. It means helping consumers to understand the facts: that the charging network is there for them today and on track for tomorrow.

The very opposite of backing us is a watered-down ZEV mandate, arbitrary targets that will do nothing to accelerate rollout, and charging infrastructure described a key problem holding back the UK's transition to EVs – these are the quickest ways to see investment in charging infrastructure dry up and the roll out ground to a halt.

I would welcome a meeting to discuss these points at the earliest convenience.

Vicky

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