FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
January 13, 2017

CONTACT
William Pitman, Governor’s Office
william.pitman@state.ma.us
Peter Lorenz, Energy and Environmental Affairs
peter.lorenz@state.ma.us

Governor Baker Signs Electric Vehicle Promotion Legislation

Bill Encourages the Purchase and Use of Zero Emission Vehicles in the Commonwealth

BOSTON – Today, in a bipartisan effort to promote the sale and use of zero emission vehicles (ZEVs) in the Commonwealth, Governor Charlie Baker signed Senate Bill 2505, An Act Promoting Zero Emission Vehicle Adoption. The legislation works to increase access to ZEV charging stations for the general public by prohibiting owners of public charging stations from charging users a subscription or membership fee and requiring the use of payment options available to the general public. Further, the legislation allows municipalities and private businesses to restrict parking spaces specifically for ZEV use, and builds upon the Baker-Polito Administration’s ongoing commitment to adopting emerging clean energy technologies as the Commonwealth continues to add renewable energy generation into the Massachusetts’ diverse energy portfolio.

“Adopting clean technology and promoting additional zero emission vehicles is a critical piece of meeting our emissions reductions goals,” said Governor Charlie Baker. “Today’s zero emission vehicle legislation makes major strides towards providing consumers with confidence that charging stations will be available to them, whether on a long trip or at work, a commonly cited hurdle in transitioning from traditional to zero emission vehicles.”

“Our administration is committed to improving the Commonwealth’s transportation infrastructure and this legislation will give electric vehicle owners the confidence they need to travel our state roadways with access to charging stations,” said Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito. “We look forward to working with our state and municipal partners to find increased opportunities to integrate more electric and fuel efficient vehicles into their fleets.”
to save taxpayer dollars and reduce emissions.”

In 2016 the Baker-Polito Administration committed $14 million to the Commonwealth’s electric vehicle rebate program, Massachusetts Offers Rebates for Electric Vehicles (MOR-EV), more than doubling the historic funding of the MOR-EV program. Massachusetts automotive consumers can qualify for rebates ranging from $750-$2,500 on the purchase or lease of more than 25 qualifying new electric vehicles, including battery electric, plug-in hybrid electric and fuel cell electric vehicles. Since June 2014, the MOR-EV program has issued or reserved over $7 million for 3,355 vehicles, cutting the state’s greenhouse gas emissions output by an estimated 9,255 short tons annually.

“The Baker-Polito Administration is committed to promoting clean transportation as one of the most direct and cost-effective ways to reduce emissions,” said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Matthew Beaton. “As the Commonwealth continues to make impressive strides towards increased electric vehicle adoption, this legislation gives our municipal, business and state partners the tools they need to build upon that growth.”

“The increased adoption of electric vehicles is a key component of our mission to create a clean and resilient energy future for the Commonwealth,” said Department of Energy Resources Commissioner Judith Judson. “This legislation, paired with our nation leading MOR-EV rebate program, positions Massachusetts to further reduce emissions and meet our targets under the Global Warming Solutions Act.”

The legislation tasks DOER and the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) to study state fleet electrification opportunities and file a report with the Legislature by October 1, 2017 and for MassDOT and EEA to study the feasibility of levying surcharges on ZEVs to offset gas tax revenue losses by December 1, 2017.

Senate Bill 2505 authorizes the Board of Building Regulations and Standards (BBRS) to work with the Department of Energy Resources (DOER) to promulgate regulations around ZEV charging stations for residential and commercial buildings. It also allows electric distribution companies to submit proposals to the Department of Public Utilities for approval of cost recovery to construct, own, and operate publicly available electric vehicle charging infrastructure while tasking DOER with adopting interoperability billing standards for charging stations (effective January 1, 2018).

“Massachusetts is a leader in promoting clean technology and jobs,” said House Speaker Robert A. DeLeo (D-Winthrop). “Encouraging the use of zero emission vehicles is another example of our commitment to a greener economy and culture.”

“Increasing access to charging stations for electric vehicles is critically important to shifting away from our reliance on fossil fuels,” said Senate President Stan Rosenberg (D-Amherst). “This bill moves the Commonwealth in the right direction to encourage the development and success of an important technology to help address climate change while also promoting alternative transportation technologies.”
“Under the Baker-Polito Administration, Massachusetts continues to position itself as a national leader taking innovative approaches to energy diversification,” said House Minority Leader Bradley H. Jones, Jr. (R-North Reading). “Today’s bill signing represents another important step forward in the state’s ongoing efforts to promote the expanded use of environmentally-friendly zero emission vehicles.”

“Tailpipe emissions from vehicles represent a large portion of the generated carbon monoxide and greenhouse gases that are generated each day,” said Senate Minority Leader Bruce Tarr (R-Gloucester). “Taking affirmative action to reduce our environmental impacts while advancing the technologies of zero emissions vehicles will move us towards reaching our global warming benchmarks.”

“This legislation is a great step forward in reducing our state’s transportation emissions and helping fulfill our goal to have 300,000 zero emission vehicles on the road by 2025,” said Chairman Frank I. Smizik (D-Brookline). “Ensuring our state has reliable and accessible charging infrastructure will allow residents to make environmentally conscious decisions and move Massachusetts towards a sustainable future.”

“With this law, Massachusetts is taking a major step toward making EVs the new norm for driving in our state,” said State Representative Jonathan Hecht (D-Watertown). “With predictable, convenient access to charging, consumers will find it easy to use the great new EVs manufacturers are bringing to market. Consumers will enjoy the low ‘fuel’ and maintenance costs of EVs and we will all benefit from the cleaner air and reduced GHG emissions.”

“Increasing the use of zero emissions vehicles would help reduce our dependence on fossil fuels, and I’m very pleased to have worked with my Senate and House colleagues to pass environmental legislation that will further help us reach the greenhouse gas reduction goals set by the Global Warming Solutions Act,” said State Senator Jamie Eldridge (D-Acton). “We have taken significant steps this year to protect our environment, and I wish to thank Senate President Rosenberg, Chairwoman Spilka, and their staffs for their work on this legislation, as well as the Baker-Polito Administration and Secretary Beaton for their overall support of Zero Emissions Vehicles.”

In December, state energy officials announced that Massachusetts, along with Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Vermont, will share a portion of a $500,000 federal Department of Energy grant to assist in further collaboration between the Commonwealth and Plug In America to accelerate the deployment of ZEVs through the Mass Drive Clean initiative.

“Massachusetts is a leader in reducing carbon pollution from power plants and buildings. This bill shows we are serious about tackling the transportation sector, which now comprises 40% of our greenhouse gas emissions,” said Massachusetts Sierra Club Chapter Director Emily Norton. “A huge thanks to Governor Baker and our legislative leaders in the House and Senate.”
Begun in 2015, Mass Drive Clean is a highly successful pilot program that has resulted in over 1,000 drivers and passengers test driving one or more electric vehicles at employer sponsored and public events to date. The drives are a way for interested drivers to get behind the wheel of multiple makes and models of these clean vehicles. Each driver is surveyed before and after driving, with 83% saying that their overall opinion of a ZEV is better than before their test drive and 68% said that they were more likely to purchase one now that they had experienced the performance of the cars. Plug In America has shown in California that about 10% of ride and drive participants will purchase a ZEV within six months.

####