

NRECA Cultivating Partnerships to Help Cooperatives Prepare for Transportation Electrification

Key Highlights

- As the nation's transportation sector transitions to electric power, success will hinge on the build-out of robust electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure nationwide, including rural America. This will require creative partnerships between electric co-ops, the federal government, and other stakeholders.
- NRECA is committed to actively shaping programs and benefits to ensure seamless electric vehicle service equipment (EVSE) integration and effective load management for cooperative members by maintaining and enhancing relationships with federal agencies, national labs, and other organizations.
- This factsheet details NRECA's work with federal agencies and national trade associations on electric cooperatives' behalf, and our involvement with several initiatives to enhance resources to support cooperatives in planning for and managing new EV loads.

The Impact on the Grid

The transformation of various sectors of the economy through increased electrification, including but not limited to the transportation sector, presents a significant opportunity for the electric sector. However, this transformation comes with challenges. A recent study by the National Academies of Sciences highlights the need for total electricity generation to increase by up to 170% by 2050, alongside a substantial expansion of the transmission grid.¹ Additionally, the impact on the local distribution system cannot be overlooked and will require more investment over time. To meet tomorrow's energy needs effectively, it is crucial for cooperatives to account for this increased demand and plan accordingly. But important questions remain unanswered, such as when and where these vehicles will need to be charged, and how fast – each of which is critical to the cooperative being able to serve the load in a cost-effective manner that does not harm reliability or add cost burden to their consumer-members.

NRECA has established and is fostering robust relationships with federal agencies, national labs, and other organizations to help cooperatives to answer these important questions. Part of that process entails providing opportunities for NRECA's members to provide their direct feedback and unique perspective as electric cooperatives to these entities as they develop tools and information that will be vital to planning for grid investment.

¹ <https://www.nationalacademies.org/news/2021/02/new-report-charts-path-to-net-zero-carbon-emissions-by-2050-recommends-near-term-policies-to-ensure-fair-and-equitable-economic-transition-and-revitalization-of-manufacturing-industry>

Cooperatives have a unique opportunity to voice their needs, concerns, and expertise related to grid upgrades, load management, and other aspects of EV adoption and, in turn, help ensure the tools developed will be used and useful in planning for EV loads, particularly in rural America.

Communicating and Advocating for Cooperative Needs

NRECA works closely with federal agencies and national trade associations to highlight the unique role that electric cooperatives play in transportation electrification, communicate their challenges, and advocate for workable solutions, particularly those associated with serving rural and remote areas.

- **Joint Office of Energy and Transportation**

NRECA connects state officials and cooperatives when needed to collaborate on EV charging projects arising out of the National EV Infrastructure (NEVI) formula program. We successfully advocated that minor grid upgrades should be eligible for NEVI funding, as reflected in [updated guidance](#) to the states.

- **Environmental Protection Agency**

NRECA is collaborating with the EPA and other utility trade organizations on information resources to facilitate productive school district conversations with utilities prior to submitting applications to the [Clean School Bus program](#).

- **National Association of State Energy Officials (NASEO) and American Association of Highway Traffic Officials (AASHTO)**

NRECA is facilitating opportunities for cooperatives to provide their direct feedback to state Department of Transportation (DOT) and state energy offices at regional convenings held by NASEO and AASHTO as the states design and implement the NEVI program and other EV charging programs.

- **Alliance for Transportation Electrification**

NRECA is working with industry stakeholders to advocate for utility collaboration in transportation electrification and elevate specific issues of concern to electric cooperatives, such as supply chain constraints and interconnection challenges.

- **Electric School Bus Coalition**

NRECA is supporting [a broad-based industry coalition](#) that is cultivating and advocating for more opportunities to electrify school bus fleets across the country.

Close Collaboration Yielding Results

NRECA is providing feedback to several external initiatives, both government-led and industry-driven, to enhance resources being developed that can support cooperatives in planning for and managing new EV loads.

- **DOE's EVs@Scale Lab Consortium**

NRECA is participating on the advisory board for this consortium which brings together national laboratories and key stakeholders to conduct infrastructure research and development to address

challenges and barriers for high-power EV charging infrastructure that enable greater safety, grid operation reliability, and consumer confidence.

- **DOE’s Caldera Simulation Tool**

NRECA is hosting learning opportunities for this tool that will help cooperatives understand chargers’ power needs from the grid and will facilitate opportunities for cooperatives to provide feedback to the DOE and the national labs for future refinement.

- **NEVI U-Finder**

NRECA has facilitated conversations and training opportunities for members with the Joint Office regarding NEVI U-Finder – a tool created by the Joint Office of Energy and Transportation to help school districts and others identify local utility partners.

- **EPRI’s EVs2Scale 2030**

NRECA is participating in EPRI’s three-year initiative, EVs2Scale2030, that will collaborate with more than 500 stakeholders, including Amazon, the U.S. Department of Energy, and leading electric utilities, to prepare the grid in support of the accelerated development of EV charging infrastructure. EPRI will produce tools that will assist utilities in planning for EV loads.

- **DOT’s Rural EV Toolkit**

NRECA brought its EV consortium of members together to provide feedback to the DOT to enhance the outcome of this toolkit designed specifically to support transportation electrification in rural communities.

Contacts

Jannah Denney

Electric Vehicle Strategy & Solutions Manager
Business and Technology Strategies
501-400-5548
jannah.denney@nreca.coop

Stephanie Crawford

Regulatory Affairs Director
Regulatory Affairs
571-623-4049
stephanie.crawford@nreca.coop