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Assembly approves bill to allow people to charge for using electric vehicle charging systems

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The Assembly approved in a voice vote the amended version of a bill that would allow people to charge for the use of electric vehicle charging stations.

Rep. Deb. Andraca, D-Whitefish Bay, criticized the bill for what she called a “power grab” by public utilities.

The Senate bill would bar municipalities from being sole owners of a charging station on public property. Instead, they would have to partner with a third party. That would make clear that private businesses can have charging stations for electric vehicles and charge a fee without becoming a public utility.

Andraca said the move goes against free market principles.

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“This bill is shortsighted. What started off as a bright idea is now little more than a dim bulb,” Andraca said.

Bill author Nancy VanderMeer disagreed and said considering current law, the bill would enhance charging stations.

“Right now the only way that electricity charges can be collected for a fee is if you are an electric utility, so this opens it up to the free market,” the Tomah Republican said.

The Assembly added an amendment that would create an exception that would allow the state and local governments to own, operate or manage a charging

station in certain circumstnaces.

The amendment the Assembly added requires the bill to go back to the Senate before it could go to Gov. Tony Evers.