

# Sen. Cowles: Rock County one of the first, but won't be the last to challenge the private sector EV charging market

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*Cowles Lambasts Plan to Outcompete Private Industry,*

*Reiterates Previous Warnings about Public Sector Overreach*

GREEN BAY– Senator Robert Cowles (R-Green Bay) released the following statement in response to the Rock County Board of Supervisor's Adopted Resolution from March 24th that lays out a plan to use federal funds for 100 county government-managed solar-powered electric vehicle (EV) charging stations and to have these charging stations accessible to the public without assessing a fee for use:

*"I am typically not one to question the important role that local governments play in the management of our state. However, one area that local governments do not belong in is in the delivery of transportation fuel to the public. Just as a network of gas stations has grown and been maintained in the private market throughout the state without the ownership of gas stations by local governments, with proper free market incentives and state legal clarity, an EV charging station network could grow throughout our state without government involvement.*

*"Instead of letting businesses respond to demand, Rock County is proposing is to use taxpayer dollars for the purchase, installation, maintenance, and upkeep of an EV charging station network. In other words, they'll use taxpayer subsidization to*

*offer charging at no cost and outcompete the private market which must assess user fees to pay for their upfront capital and ongoing expenses. EV growth will happen in Wisconsin regardless of government intervention, so just as we did with gas stations, the private sector should lead the coming buildout.*

***“Basically, Rock County’s local taxpayers will be paying to fuel the cars of the already financially well-off as their own gas prices soar. Rock County isn’t the only governmental entity looking into this matter either, as U.S. Senator Baldwin (D-Wisconsin) bragged earlier this month in a [press release](#) about an earmark she secured for the state Department of Transportation to provide public-facing EV charging stations, which is yet another attempt to circumvent private markets and outcompete private businesses.***

***“It frustrates, but doesn’t surprise me that a local government truly believes their taxpayers, including the most disadvantaged residents, should be paying to have visitors drive their expensive EVs through the county with a free charge, possibly while on the way to somewhere else. **Just a few weeks ago on the Senate floor, I warned that, without my legislation being passed ([2021 Senate Bill 573](#)) to prevent government encroachment into the private sector, we would see immense consequences for private businesses and taxpayers. Unfortunately, I’m sorry to see my prediction is coming true sooner than I would have imagined.***”**