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PowerFlex Inc.

May 15, 2023

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Hon. Michelle L. Phillips, Secretary
New York State Public Service Commission
3 Empire State Plaza
Albany, New York 12223-1350
secretary@dps.ny.gov

Re: Case 18-E-0138, Advanced Energy United and ACE NY Comments in Response to the Midpoint Review of the Electric Vehicle Make-Ready Program

Dear Secretary Phillips:

PowerFlex hereby submits for filing in the captioned docket its comments in response to the New York State Register Notice of the Department of Public Service Staff Electric Vehicle Make-Ready Program Midpoint Review and Recommendations Whitepaper issued on March 15, 2023. Pursuant to the Notice, these comments are timely filed within 60 days of publication.

Respectfully Submitted,

Raghav Murali
Director, Policy and Government Affairs
PowerFlex Inc.

Dear Secretary Phillips:

PowerFlex Inc. (PowerFlex) submits these comments in response to the New York State Public Service Commission's (Commission) *Electric Vehicle Make-Ready Program Midpoint Review and Recommendations Whitepaper* filed on March 1, 2023. PowerFlex has installed, owns, and operates more than 10,000 Level 2 (L2) and direct current fast charging (DCFC) electric vehicle supply equipment (EVSE) in the United States and uses adaptive load management (ALM) at each of its sites to manage EV load and reduce impacts on existing electrical infrastructure. Through ALM, PowerFlex has reduced the need to upgrade customer-sited electrical infrastructure at hundreds of sites and has consequently saved customers millions of dollars in avoided upgrades. Many of these EVSE have been funded through state make ready programs, and PowerFlex thus offers these comments based on its experience using ALM and participating in several make ready programs.

Waitlisted Projects/Application Process

PowerFlex strongly supports Staff's recommendation to create a stakeholder process/working group to address application technical difficulties. In applying to the program, we have experienced application portal access and submission issues and agree that there need to be revisions to simplify and streamline the application process. While we plan to participate in this stakeholder process, we provide some of our high-level suggestions, including:

- Applications should be separated out by stage (i.e., eligibility, engineering) instead of one application with asterisks and character limits
    - Character limits are not stated which errors and cancels the entire application out if not followed
- Document upload should allow larger file sizes to be uploaded
- Customers should have the option to apply under a customer name but assign the rebate to the contractor/network provider
- Eligible funding (in dollar amounts) should be clearer as part of the application process and show a preliminary qualifying amount earlier in the process rather than waiting until the program agreement
- Wait time and likelihood of funding should be communicated to applicants

Communication Standards

PowerFlex supports 3rd-party testing for OCPP version 1.6. However, we contend that proprietary extensions should be allowed as part of OCPP if any proprietary extensions are made publicly available for any vehicle or customer to use. Some units may require proprietary extensions to communicate between cloud servers and chargers, so this should be allowed given that they are made publicly available.

PowerFlex conditionally supports adopting ISO 15118 within the program. We propose a phased approach to ISO 15118 implementation as has been adopted in California.[1] Currently, any chargers funded through certain California programs must be ISO 15118 "Ready" by July 1, 2023. This means that chargers must have the hardware to allow them to use 15118. However, they are not yet required to be 15118 "Enabled," which means they do not yet need to be using the 15118-communication standard. The requirement to be 15118 Enabled will come in time as the technologies, hardware, software, and firmware become more widely available. This will give time for the market to develop and adopt the necessary technologies to use this communication standard. Once the technologies are ready for widescale use, chargers that are 15118 Ready will be able to turn on the functionalities to be 15118 Enabled. We propose following a similar approach in NY to give the market the necessary time to adopt this protocol.

Battery Energy Storage/Advanced Technologies

PowerFlex strongly supports including load management/ALM technologies that defer or avoid infrastructure buildout to be eligible for incentives under the program. ALM hardware and software can provide significant financial customer and ratepayer benefit, and providing incentives for these technologies will further encourage their use. Pacific Gas and Electric in California noted that sites in its territory that used ALM saved customers $30,000 - $200,000 per site.[2] PowerFlex uses ALM at each of its sites and has avoided infrastructure buildout at hundreds of customer sites, saving millions of dollars in both customer- and utility-side infrastructure buildouts and can speak firsthand to the customer, ratepayer, and grid benefits that ALM technologies provide.

PowerFlex recommends that the program be technology agnostic toward load management technologies. While Staff reference batteries several times in this section of the White Paper, other types of software and hardware can provide benefits as well. For example, PowerFlex's ALM is primarily software with the use of only a few pieces of hardware on the site. Through this software, we manage charging load within the site's existing infrastructure limits, eliminating the need for additional infrastructure buildout. Thus, the program should be technology agnostic toward load management technologies.

Data Reporting

PowerFlex supports a technical conference to discuss data reporting difficulties and potential solutions. Data reporting has been an issue in most Make Ready programs in which we have participated, and we agree that streamlining data reporting requirements will reduce administrator and applicant administrative costs.

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[1] *CEC Recommendation for Deployment of ISO 15118-Ready Chargers*, California Energy Commission, Docket Number 19-AB-2127, February 24, 2022. Accessed May 11, 2023 at: https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/GetDocument.aspx?tn=241955#:~:text=Yes.-,ISO%2015118%2Dready%20chargers%20should%20be%20capable%20of%20selecting%20the,(%2D2%20and%20%2D20).

[2] *Pacific Gas and Electric Company Electric Vehicle Charge 2 Prepared Testimony*, pages 2-9 – 2-10, October 26, 2021.

Driver Complaint Process and Procedures

While PowerFlex agrees that the appropriate contact information should be provided on each charger, we argue there should not be too much information that could confuse customers. We recommend that network provider (Ex. PowerFlex), app qr code, and support helpline number should be provided on each charger. However, customer contacts are usually not involved with support services or day to day operation of EVSE and therefore should not be contacted for user support.

Power Sharing

As already stated, PowerFlex uses ALM and power Sharing at each of its sites. Thus, PowerFlex argues that sites should be allowed to power as it can have significant cost savings by avoiding customer- and utility-side infrastructure buildout. The program should not establish a required utility-to-customer side ratio as each site will have different load management and power sharing needs. California has adopted a rule through building codes that sites using ALM should have enough panel space for a minimum of 3.3 kW for each charger. However, this rule has become a hinderance as we have sites that, through using ALM, could size panel space even lower for each EVSE and manage charging according to driver and site needs. Therefore, the program should not set a cap or limit on power sharing capability and should leave this to each site to decide how to best manage power sharing.

PowerFlex appreciates the opportunity to provide these comments and to participate in the Power Ready Midpoint Review. Respectfully submitted,

Raghav Murali
Director of Policy and Government Affairs
PowerFlex