



## SOCIETY FOR AMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGY

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Ms. Jaime L. Loichinger  
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401 F Street NW, Suite 308  
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VIA EMAIL: [program\\_alternatives@achp.gov](mailto:program_alternatives@achp.gov)

Dear Ms. Loichinger:

The Society for American Archaeology (SAA) appreciates the opportunity to provide the following comments on the draft Exemption from Historic Preservation Review for Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment (EVSE). While we understand the need to deploy EVSE as quickly as possible in order to electrify the federal vehicle fleet, create charging stations in federal properties, and support regulatory steps that would facilitate that process, the SAA has some concerns about the proposed exemption.

The SAA is an international organization that, since its founding in 1934, has been dedicated to research about and interpretation and protection of the archaeological heritage of the Americas. With more than 5,500 members, the SAA represents professional and avocational archaeologists, archaeology students in colleges and universities, and archaeologists working at tribal agencies, museums, government agencies, and the private sector. The SAA has members throughout the United States, as well as in many nations around the world.

As drafted, the proposed exemption for EVSE would allow federal agencies to proceed with the installation and maintenance of Level 1, 2, and 3 EVSE locations without having to carry out Section 106 reviews to take into account the effects of the undertakings on National Register-eligible or listed historic properties. The exemption would apply to only those installations that take place within an existing disturbance footprint, that will have minimal or no adverse effect on those properties, and that use reversible, non-permanent construction techniques. The levels described in the notice consist of “freestanding or wall-mounted charging structure(s)” that deliver 110/120V (Level 1), 208/240V (Level 2), and Direct Current (Level 3) charges. The exemption would apply to undertakings on tribal lands only if the affected tribes agree to its use. It would not apply to undertakings that impact historic properties of religious and cultural importance to tribal or Native Hawaiian organizations.

Because of the pressing need to deploy EVSE, and because it will be possible in some situations to install EVSE within existing footprints and without having adverse impacts on historic

properties, the SAA supports the concept of an exemption for these types of undertakings. The draft exemption, however, fails to take into full account all of the possible impacts of electrical infrastructure installation on properties and their surrounding landscapes and needs to be amended to reflect these realities. Specifically, the existing draft makes no mention of the following scenarios or issues:

- 1) Installation of EVSE will often require the “roughing in” of new cables in the ground—sometimes for long stretches—surrounding impacted buildings. Will the exemption include this work (i.e., is *all* of the ground disturbed by the project to be considered part of the footprint)?
- 2) How many EVSE locations will be allowed per Register-eligible property under the exemption, and will that number fluctuate with the size of the property? In other words, what are the parameters involved?
- 3) What happens when—not if—construction turns up accidental discoveries of previously unknown historic resources once excavation and installation work begins? Under the current draft, no consideration needs to be given to the newly found historic resource, even if it is Register-eligible.
- 4) Who will make the determination whether an installation will have minimal or no adverse effect?
- 5) Who will provide oversight of this work, to ensure that the terms of the exemption are being met? Will it be state or tribal historic preservation officers, federal agency preservation officers, private-sector contractors, etc.?
- 6) While many or even most of the EVSE locations may be wall-mounted, even such installations could be detrimental to the visual, architectural, and historic integrity of the property, if not done correctly. What assurances can be added that installations will be done properly and what are the consequences if they are not?

We urge you to address these and other issues in the document before you finalize it and look forward to working with you to achieve this objective.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter,



Deborah L. Nichols, PhD, RPA  
President