

Testimony of  
Elliot Matos  
In Opposition to  
HB 7142  
Transportation Public Hearing  
Legislative Office Building,  
Hartford, Connecticut  
February 25, 2019

Good Afternoon, Senator Leone, Representative Lemar, Senator Martin, Representative Devlin, and members of the Transportation Committee. My name is Elliot Matos and I am the Service Manager for Hoffman Automotive, a local family business with stores located East Hartford, Avon and New London. Hoffman Auto is a 3<sup>rd</sup> generation business with over 300 employees. I have worked for Hoffman for many years, rising up through the ranks of the company, I have a good job as do my co-workers, we have good pay, medical benefits, a pension plan and paid vacation. I want to keep my job and so do those who work with me at Hoffman.

I am here today to speak in opposition to HB 7142 - An Act Concerning the Licensing of New and Used Car Dealers. I do so on behalf of my customers who rely on locally owned stores, with locally based professionally staffed service facilities and fully stocked parts departments for quick and immediate service, repair, maintenance and warranty work.

The highly skilled technicians that work at our dealerships are trained to work on different cars that are sold, including all electric vehicles. The 270 Connecticut dealers have many thousands of expert technicians, in over 400 local service facilities attached to our dealerships, with thousands of service bays, locally stocked parts on site to replace parts, fix pieces, do recalls and get cars safely on the road again for our customers. Dealers do this for the convenience of the hundreds of thousands of your constituents that we serve every day. Our service advisors know our customers personally. We work diligently to make sure the manufacturers provide the right repair protocols and cover the costs on any recalls and warranty issues. We ensure our customers receive warranty work, lemon law assistance, and repair service that they are entitled to as a customer. The dealers do this well.

I understand why Tesla wants you to authorize manufacturer owned stores in this bill. Because it's good for Tesla and its bottom line. But, is it good for consumers...NO, it is not good for the consumer, your constituents. This bill allows Tesla to set-up out of state and out of region repair and parts storage facilities. This service model is less costly for Tesla because unlike my service facility, direct sell service facilities don't keep parts and inventory immediately on site and don't have service technicians on site in their Gallery show rooms. These are only storefronts where the cars are sold. Consumers will bear the cost and inconveniences of waiting days and weeks to get repairs, parts, maintenance work and, most critically, safety recall work complete.

Numerous press reports tell horror stories of Tesla consumers waiting weeks and sometimes months for even the simplest repair or part. Please see the attached sample of just a few issues with Tesla repair and customer service associated with Tesla and the direct sale system that this bill will authorize. It might

be good for Tesla, but it is not good for consumers. These articles demonstrate why it is so important to have sales and service from franchised dealers under our existing law that this bill would bypass. Don't be fooled by promises that Tesla makes when they say they will follow the same laws as dealers. Last year they asked the legislature to not only authorize Gallery stores but also numerous stand-alone remotely located regional repair facilities. Customers continue to wait for repairs and work.

The dealerships also provide chargers for electric vehicles. Connecticut new car dealers have 44 EV charging stations available to the public, most without a cost, regardless of car brand. This accounts for 15% of public chargers in Connecticut.

It is ironic that Tesla argues they are concerned with putting a larger charging network into Connecticut's charging infrastructure with the assumption this will encourage more EVs to be purchased. It's ironic because the charging stations Tesla proposes are only for Tesla. They are the only EV manufacturer that prohibits access to other EVs at their charging network. All other EVs, including Teslas, can use the universal chargers that are located throughout Connecticut and Connecticut dealerships.

The exclusivity of the Tesla charging stations does not serve the public or the environment well, it only serves the corporate interest of Tesla Motors. Access to charging stations should be universal if we want to encourage more EVs and continue to reduce range anxiety. Our Trade association CARA, the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) the Federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and numerous environmental groups have been working together for years to reduce range anxiety, most CARA dealers even make their charging stations universally available for free to all drivers, even Tesla drivers. I'm not saying that Tesla's corporately owned exclusive ONE PERCENTER ONLY charging stations network must be free, but certainly, you as our legislators should insist that they be ACCESSIBLE TO ALL, even for a fee.



*Charging For All (Tesla Charging for Free at Nissan Dealership)*



*Tesla Only Chargers*

With Connecticut's clean air goals; the way to accomplish this is to sell more electric vehicles. Dealers do this and know how to do this.

This bill is not necessary, Tesla can sell its cars in our state today. They choose not to because they refuse to abide by our laws - laws that all other auto manufacturers follow. I encourage this committee and our legislature to vote no on HB 7142. Thank you for your time.

# ATTACHMENT TO TESTIMONY OF ELLIOT MATOS

## HOTCARS.COM

### Problems With Tesla Nobody Talks About

- BY **LYNDI HOPKINS**
- – ON NOV 27, 2018
- IN **CAR CULTURE**

**Maintenance Costs Will Burn A Hole In Your Pocket** Part of the appeal of buying something expensive is the expectation that it will save you money in the future. But Tesla has earned a spot in the hall-of-fame for overpriced vehicles, and that doesn't just apply to the sticker price but also takes into account all of the maintenance costs that plague owners. Even though the Tesla's don't need oil changes, spark plug replacements, or oil filters, Tesla recommends drivers invest in their maintenance plans that include a thorough inspection of the vehicle every 12,000 miles. The prices vary based on the year and model of the car, as well as which specific plan the driver chooses, but standalone inspections range anywhere from \$475 to \$750 per visit (not including repairs). A four-year maintenance plan is around \$2,500. Needless to say, you'll need to have a good chunk of change set aside for these evaluations.

**Tesla Service Centers Have Slow Turnaround** Speaking of car troubles, Tesla dealerships are so sparse that many owners are forced to plan out their trip to the service center much more thoroughly than the average driver would. Unfortunately, the plight with their new Tesla's can sometimes be uncharted territory for mechanics—this is a relatively new technology, after all—so it may take several days, and sometimes even weeks, before owners get to see their cars again. What's worse is that many of these technical difficulties aren't fully resolved during the first visit. Like we've said before, there isn't much knowledge on electric vehicles and technicians may not be as familiar with the problems that plague these vehicles, primarily because a Tesla operates more like a computer than it does an old gas guzzler.

**Repairs (And Insurance) Will Gouge Your Wallet** Along with the sketchy aspect of having an electric vehicle, there's also a major setback on the cost to repair it as well. While a charge may not be so pricey, the cost to replace any of the parts on a Tesla can really become a burden. For instance, if you had to buy a new battery for a Model 3, the base would cost around \$6,500 (on the low end) and the extended-range battery would come close to \$10k. Sadly, that's as much as a used car (maybe even a few). There's a domino effect with these overpriced repairs as well, as the price to insure a Tesla tends to be more than the average vehicle. The high rate of accidents in Teslas is partly to blame, but their expensive repairs are no help.

**Tesla Is Too Cool For Dealerships** Tesla has just recently begun opening service centers in areas with a large amount of foot traffic, but the idea of dealerships is a concept of the past for this manufacturer.