

Electric Vehicle Frequently Asked Questions

Overview

There were more than 2000 electric vehicles registered in Lake Oswego last year up from 57 ten years ago. As the effects of climate change become more pronounced switching to electric vehicles is one of the quickest and most significant changes people can make to both reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reduce air pollution.

Consequently Oregon and a growing number of other states will ban the sale of new fossil fuel vehicles starting in 2035. Recognizing this major car companies such as Ford, GM, Volkswagen and others have plans to switch to all electric offerings within a decade or so.

EVs are too expensive!

That used to be true but no longer is. The 2023 Chevy Bolt with 259 miles of range starts at \$26,500 while the subcompact SUV 2023 Chevy Bolt EUV with 247 miles starts at \$27,800. Both qualify for \$7,500 in federal tax credits and potentially another \$7,500 in rebates from Oregon.

When you realize that the cost to operate and maintain your EV can be up to 70% less than a fossil fuel car, you can actually save money by buying an EV now.

They take too long to charge

“Refueling” electric vehicles requires rethinking the difference between refueling with fossil fuel and with electricity.

With fossil fuel you fill up your tank when it gets low. Some days you may have a full tank. Other days it maybe low. Most people with electric vehicles will charge their car at home meaning that virtually everyday they will leave with a “full tank”.

The only times you need to be concerned about charging is when you are driving beyond the range of the car’s batteries. At this point you will want to plan to charge with a high voltage or super charger. Tesla has installed over 50,000 [Superchargers](#) worldwide that will charge to about 80% capacity in 20 minutes.

Most of these chargers are located in areas with coffee shops and restaurants so by the time your “break” is over your EV will be ready to go.

There aren’t enough charging stations around

The number of charging stations is rapidly growing. The Federal National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) is in the process of installing chargers along all major highways and throughout rural countryside.

In the meantime in a major shift Tesla has signed agreements with virtually all EV manufacturers to give their customers access to Tesla’s Supercharger network. This means that all of those EV customers will be able to drive virtually anywhere in North America without worrying about where they can charge.

In Lake Oswego the number of charging locations is rapidly expanding to the point where there are now more charging stations (20) than gasoline stations (12). See the list <https://losn.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/LOchargers.pdf>

Since so much electricity is generated by coal, isn’t pollution worse with EVs?

Actually, no. EVs are a cleaner alternative right now in every part of the U.S. As utilities move toward more renewable sources of electricity generation this will get even better.

In accordance with Oregon’s recently passed Clean Energy Bill, PGE and Pacific Power are on a path to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2030 and to be at 100% clean energy by 2040. This is not just happening in Oregon but through out the U.S. as the cost of renewable energy has become cheaper than fossil fuel causing utilities to move away from coal and eventually from natural gas.

Won't EVs put a strain on utilities to produce enough electricity?

As more energy efficiency practices are put into effect, the per capita demand for electricity has decreased. Utilities see electric vehicles reversing that trend. Even so [studies](#) show that if 80% of all passenger cars became electric this would lead to a total increase of 10-15 % in electricity consumption.

Won't all of these batteries just end up in a landfill?

Electric car batteries can be [repurposed](#) for other applications such as solar energy storage and data center backup. After that, companies such as [Redwood Materials](#) are able to extract over 95% of the metals to be reused in making new batteries.

Isn't the environment better off if I just keep driving my old car?

Not according to a [study done by the Union of Concerned Scientists](#). Their analysis shows that in a life cycle analysis the manufacturing of a fossil fueled automobile is only responsible for 8-12% of its total GHG emissions. The rest comes from burning fossil fuel to operate the vehicle. Depending on how rapidly renewably generated electricity comes online the payback of moving to an electric vehicle can be quite rapid.

What financial incentives are available for electric vehicles?

The recently passed Inflation Reduction Act continues to support a \$7,500 federal tax credit along with incentives for EV chargers and home electrical upgrades. The focus of the legislation is to encourage domestic production so the number of vehicles that qualify for the tax credit will grow as more companies move their manufacturing to the U.S. Check out www.fueleconomy.gov to find out what level of tax credit each EV may qualify for.

Oregon rebates start at \$2,500 and could be as high as \$7,500 for low to moderate income levels. See [Oregon Clean Vehicles Rebate Program](#) for more information.

What happens if my home loses electricity?

If that happens your local gas station most likely won't have electricity for their pumps and if they do you may end up in a long line hoping they don't run out of gas. If you keep your EV plugged in at night you will be starting with a "full tank" that can give you more than a couple of hundred miles to reach a charger. However if you own an EV like the Ford F150 Lightning with vehicle to home capability you can use the truck's batteries to run your home for up to a week depending on usage.

What other benefits are there?

Safety is a big plus for EVs. With batteries in the undercarriage there is a low center of gravity and without an engine in the front there is less chance of being impaled from a front end collision. Data from the National Highway Safety Administration confirms this. The Tesla Model 3 received their highest Five Star safety rating and their data shows that the Model 3 has [the lowest probability of injury](#) of any car they tested.

One of the most significant additional benefits of moving toward electric vehicles is the health benefit of eliminating air pollution generated by the burning of fossil fuel by vehicles. A [study by MIT](#) calculated that increased air pollution from vehicles that burn fossil fuel contributes to 58,000 premature deaths annually in the U.S. This compares to [38,000](#) deaths caused by automobiles accidents.