

# ELECTRIFYING AMERICA: EXPANDING EV INFRASTRUCTURE FOR A MORE SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL FUTURE

To truly create a more sustainable travel industry that considers both the environmental impact and economic benefits of travel, the federal government must prioritize the expansion of electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure.

## POWERING A MORE SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL INDUSTRY

The great American road trip isn't a vestige of a bygone era but the current reality of domestic travel in the United States. Out of the nearly 48 million Americans AAA forecasted traveling for the July 4 holiday, 44 million were traveling by car.<sup>1</sup> Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, approximately 80% of all trips were taken by car.

With such overwhelming numbers of Americans eschewing other modes of transportation in favor of car trips, expanding EV charging infrastructure on travel corridors across the U.S. is the **only feasible way** to ensure travel demand can increase sustainably, and that America's roadways can continue to connect smaller, rural areas to urban population centers.

## THE INEVITABLE EV EXPANSION

In many ways, the future is already here. Once viewed as a Silicon Valley fad, EVs are now common on roadways across the United States and are growing in popularity by the year. In 2010, just under 275,000 hybrid electric vehicles and plug-in electric hybrid vehicles were sold in the U.S. In 2019, *more than 726,000* hybrid electric, plug-in hybrid-electric and electric vehicles were sold in the U.S.—an increase of 164% in less than a decade.<sup>2</sup>

The Biden administration has been ambitious in establishing its vision for an electrified future, setting a goal of installing 500,000 new EV charging stations by 2030. States, too, are codifying the path toward a more sustainable future. In March 2021, Virginia joined 15 other states and the District of Columbia in adopting low-emission vehicle (LEV) and zero-emission vehicle (ZEV) rules.<sup>3</sup> State and federal expansion goals—combined with the fact that automakers are offering even more affordable EV models—make EVs an increasingly attractive choice for American consumers.

## ROADBLOCKS TO EXPANDING EV INFRASTRUCTURE

**The problem is two-pronged:** Large parts of the country lack the EV infrastructure necessary to accommodate travelers, and relevant grants and tax credits have historically been inadequate or too narrow in their eligibility requirements to feasibly expand EV infrastructure. The interstate highway system's lack of ready EV infrastructure is illustrated by [this map](#).

The lack of connectivity is one of the biggest impediments to Americans purchasing EVs. According to national survey data reported by the Department of Transportation, 78% of Americans believe that finding an EV charging station is at least "moderately difficult."

These concerns are not unfounded. For example, one of the top travel corridors on the East Coast is between Washington, D.C., and Myrtle Beach, SC, yet a sizeable portion of the route in South Carolina has no EV infrastructure—making the destination difficult to access for EV drivers. Further, parts of the route are not part of the highway system eligible for certain federal grants to build EV infrastructure. As EVs continue to grow in popularity, parts of the country—particularly rural areas—will be cut off from visitors who drive EVs due to the lack of EV infrastructure.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure EV infrastructure growth does not stall amid America's pandemic recovery, the federal government must continue to incentivize businesses—and consumers—to adopt EVs and EV infrastructure.

### **Empower Americans to travel anywhere in the U.S. by electric vehicle:**

- Establish a federal grant program within the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) to fund a national network of charging infrastructure. DOT should establish the network by identifying the most highly used corridors for long-haul passenger travel, including corridors identified in DOT's National Travel and Tourism Infrastructure Strategic Plan and expanding eligibility to U.S. airports.
- Expand EV corridor designations to every eligible corridor identified in DOT's National Travel and Tourism Strategic Plan to ensure more travel businesses along heavily trafficked corridors are eligible to receive grants through U.S. Department of Energy programs.

### **Incentivize more Americans to own electric vehicles:**

- Extend the Section 30C tax credit beyond its December 31, 2021 deadline through 2029.
- Expand the Section 30C tax credit from its \$30,000 cap up to \$200,000 per property, clarifying that the credit applies separately to each item of refueling property and includes the cost of installation. This would incentive more lodging facilities and highly trafficked travel destinations to increase the availability of EV charging stations and quicken the transition to EVs for long-haul travel.
- Eliminate the Section 30D manufacturer's cap and replace it with a general phaseout for all manufacturers after EV sales exceed 50% of annual light vehicle retail sales.

1. [AAA: More Than 47M Americans to Celebrate With an Independence Day Getaway \(6/22/2021\)](#)

2. [U.S. Department of Transportation - Hybrid-Electric, Plug-in Hybrid-Electric and Electric Vehicle Sales](#)

3. [Energy News Network - Virginia Looks to Gain Ground in States' Slow Race on Electric Vehicle Policy](#)