

OPINION > COMMENTARY

# **Marin Voice: With or without rebate, EV market is going strong**



FILE – A sign sits at an electric vehicle charging station, March 8, 2024, at an electric vehicle charging station in London, Ohio. A new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research shows that 45% of adults in the United States say they have become more concerned about climate change over the past year, including roughly 6 in 10 Democrats and one-quarter of Republicans. (AP Photo/Joshua A. Bickel, File)



By **JANE GOULD**

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Since the November election, naysayers have been predicting the demise of electric vehicles. They say that ending the \$7,500 tax credit for purchasing an EV and enacting new tariffs will doom sales.

However, I am convinced that such arguments contort credibility and play into the hands of the petroleum industry. Fortunately, many Marin drivers don't buy into this, as evidenced by EVs representing nearly 40% of new vehicle sales here and the fact that there are now more EV chargers than gasoline stations.

It's not the first time other people have failed to see the future and those with financial interests tried to fight off a new energy source.

In the 1800s, whale oil was the fifth largest industry in this country. Before the invention of electricity, whale oil was necessary to light homes and businesses. Then kerosene and petroleum emerged as cheaper and cleaner alternatives. A product that had seemingly been an irreplaceable part of modern life was gradually rendered obsolete. Today we no longer need to kill whales, and we no longer need to power most of our vehicles with gasoline that releases carbon and pollutes the air.

Saying that the end of the \$7,500 tax credit (as promised by President-elect Donald Trump) is a deathknell rings hollow. Many car shoppers don't fall into the income brackets to qualify. In addition, the EVs they want often exceed caps set for domestic content. Last year, only seven models fully qualified. The naysayers focus on the "high cost" of a new EV, while ignoring a 2024 model by Chevrolet, the Equinox, that has a suggested retail price of \$35,000 and a range of more than 319 miles.

Don't forget, operating an EV brings additional savings since they cost less to maintain. They have about 200 parts, compared to 2,000 in a gasoline car. Used EVs are very reliable, come with a 100,000-mile battery warranty and sell for an average of \$25,000, which is more affordable than comparable used gas vehicles.

But price isn't the only issue. Naysayers are stuck in the status quo and overlook infrastructure upgrades in 2025 and 2026 that will make charging almost as convenient as the neighborhood gas station. Until now, many shoppers favored a Tesla EV because of its national charging network. Now, a similar charging network is emerging for all brands.

A federal program called the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure is dynamically growing the charging network. Its mission is to ensure charging stations no more than every 50 miles along the 80,000 miles of the nation's interstate highways. NEVI coordinates with state transportation departments to award local contracts. Today, 60% of the most heavily trafficked corridors have a fast charger at 50-mile intervals. By the end of 2025, they project 70% coverage.

Already, EVs can crisscross the country's highways with a predictable place to charge.

There is another change underfoot. The federal government is requiring that new payment systems provide open standards, as well as "plug and charge" compatibility. Drivers will no longer fumble through different credit processing systems, and they won't have to sign up for separate accounts with vendors. Significantly, this standardization will increase the charger's up-time and reliability. Down the road, these technological advances lay the foundation for bidirectional charging, which allows EV batteries to power people's homes or send excess capacity to power the grid.

It's clear to me that some of the loudest naysayers have never driven an EV, but feel compelled to defend gasoline cars. I suspect they imagine that an EV involves a lifestyle change. It appears they don't see advantages, despite the quieter ride and instant torque.

When sustainability is on the table, naysayers conveniently overlook the long-manufacturing chain of drilling, transporting, refining and underground storage needed for the petroleum in their car.

It's true that EVs use more electricity and their batteries are made with precious minerals. But their spent battery packs can be recycled, and the electricity can be "clean." However, as long as we prize mobility and travel, our travel modes will have an environmental impact. But like the vested whale hunters, we need to move forward and not defend old ways and obsolete methods.

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**2025 > January > 16**