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Eight-state coalition plans incentives for zero emission vehicles



Jonathan Alcorn for The Washington Post - Andrea Sachs charges her Nissan Leaf at the Santa Monica Pier charging station in California. With her is Paul Scott, a founding member of Plug In America.

By Lenny Bernstein, Published: October 24 [E-mail the writer](#)

A coalition of eight states announced plans Thursday to boost the use of electric cars and other zero emission vehicles, promising incentives and an improved network of fueling stations to encourage consumers to buy the vehicles and prompt manufacturers to produce more of them.

The eight governors who signed the agreement, including [Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley \(D\)](#), hope to put at least 3.3 million zero emission vehicles on their roads by 2025. To accomplish that, they pledged to install more electric charging stations, introduce or continue tax breaks for consumers and add such vehicles to government fleets. Some other states have similar incentives, though they did not join the group.

Gallery



Collectively, the eight states — California, Connecticut, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island and Vermont — represent about 23 percent of the U.S. auto market, according to information the group released Thursday.

"We think it's doable," said Mary Nichols, chairman of the Air Resources Board in California, the biggest market in the group. "The market is moving fast. It started from zero and it accelerated very quickly."



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Paving the way for zero-emission vehicles

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credit available to buyers of such vehicles, the state offers a \$1,000 excise tax credit, a \$400 tax credit for any equipment purchased and access to HOV lanes, she said.

In 2012, 1,764 electric vehicles were sold in Maryland, up from 227 in 2011. This year's sales will surpass last year's, she said.

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Nichols and others said the greatest obstacle to overcome is consumer resistance to new technology. Buyers must be convinced that the vehicles will work for them, she said, a process that usually requires seeing them on the road or in a neighbor's driveway — not just in an advertisement.

"Once we are able to get the word out to consumers that there is an infrastructure out there, and [it is] all over the state ... we'll be able to encourage a greater desire to get an electric vehicle in Maryland," said Samantha Kappalman, a spokeswoman for O'Malley.

U.S. motorists bought about 52,000 electric cars in 2012, up from about 17,000 in 2011, according to the group. More than 40,000 plug-in cars were sold in the first half of 2013. In addition to all-electric cars, the group wants to encourage production and purchase of [fuel cell vehicles](#), which run on hydrogen, and [plug-in hybrids](#), which have both electric and gasoline engines.

Fossil fuels burned to power cars, trucks, ships, trains and planes were responsible for [28 percent of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions in 2011](#), according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

Maryland wants to put 60,000 zero emission vehicles on its roads by 2020, Kappalman said, and will add another 110 to 160 public charging stations to the 430 that exist. In addition to the \$7,500 federal tax

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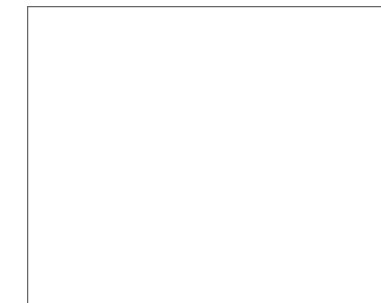
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