

DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY
State of Washington

Understanding zero-emission vehicles

Zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs) are a win-win for the environment, public health, and your wallet. By choosing these clean cars, drivers can save money and combat a leading source of pollution in Washington.

What's a zero-emission vehicle?

Zero-emission vehicles, or ZEVs, are vehicles that emit little to no tailpipe emissions—the harmful gases and particles released from a gas-powered vehicle's exhaust pipe.

BEV, or EV: Battery electric vehicle

PHEV: Plug-in hybrid vehicles with >50 miles of electric-only range

FCEV: Hydrogen fuel cell vehicle

Washington has one of the highest ZEV adoption rates in the country. The percentage of new vehicles purchased in our state that run on zero-emission technology is rising and about double the national average.

How clean vehicles benefit Washingtonians

Improving health outcomes

Tailpipe emissions cause serious health issues for people who live and work near high traffic areas (such as major ports, freeways and highways). Choosing ZEVs is one of the most impactful ways to protect our communities from cancer, asthma, lung disease, and heart disease.

Making transportation more affordable

Transportation is the second largest expense for Americans after housing. Switching to a clean vehicle can save you thousands of dollars on maintenance and fuel costs.

Protecting our climate

Transportation is Washington's leading source of greenhouse gas emissions, making up about 40% of our total climate pollution. By choosing ZEVs, we can help slow climate change and lessen its impacts.

Expanding access to clean vehicles

Washington's vehicle emissions standards

Washington's vehicle emissions standards are regulations that are designed to give new car buyers more zero-emission options when they go to the dealership. Increasing new clean vehicle sales eventually increases the number of clean vehicles in the used market too. Our standards also ensure that any new gas-powered vehicles sold here pollute less. To learn more about vehicle emissions standards in Washington, visit Ecology's website.[1]

As of June 2026, nearly

300,000

Washingtonians have chosen EVs and plug-in hybrids.

Washington has one of the

highest

ZEV adoption rates in the country.

Over

900,000

Washingtonians live near major traffic roadways and are exposed to higher levels of vehicle pollution.

Charging an EV can cost as little as

$1

per gallon in Washington.

Drivers that switch to a ZEV could save over

$2,000 per year

on fuel and maintenance costs.

Transportation accounts for about

40%

of Washington's total greenhouse gas emissions, making it the state's single largest source.

[1] https://ecology.wa.gov/cleanvehicles

Charging infrastructure

Washington is working hard to expand charging infrastructure statewide. We have invested over $200 million in state funds to support charging infrastructure projects since 2019. As of 2026, the state has more than 2,000 public DC fast charging ports and more than 6,000 public Level 2 charging ports. You can visit Washington's EV Mapping and Planning Tool to explore our charging map and view the most recent data.[2]

ZEVergreen

Governor Ferguson and Ecology launched an effort called "ZEVergreen" in September 2025 to explore ways to make ZEVs more affordable and accessible. The federal government is trying to take away Washington's vehicle emissions standards, so Governor Ferguson and Ecology launched an effort called "ZEVergreen" so we can keep making progress on clean vehicles. The goal of ZEVergreen is to come up with new policies to make ZEVs more affordable and accessible.

The first step in the process was gathering feedback from groups across Washington, which is summarized in our ZEVergreen report.[3] We heard that the main barriers to ZEV adoption are charging availability, vehicle costs, and the uncertainty caused by federal interference. These insights will directly inform future clean vehicle policy.

Frequently asked questions

Do zero-emission vehicles have enough range for daily driving?

The average American drives just over 37 miles per day. Most zero-emission passenger vehicles have a range that is 5 to 10 times greater, or between 200 and 400 miles per charge. Plus, many of these vehicles can reach 80% charge in 30 minutes or less, depending on the type of charger.

Are zero-emission vehicles more expensive than gas-powered cars?

New zero-emission vehicles can have a higher sticker price, but they can save drivers thousands of dollars over the lifetime of the vehicle thanks to lower fuel and maintenance costs. The price of new and used ZEVs are also dropping—even as gas-powered cars become more expensive.

Who is regulated by vehicle emission standards?

These standards apply to automakers—not individuals or businesses. Vehicles for sale in Washington have already been approved by the state. However, if a driver purchases a vehicle out of state, it is their responsibility to make sure it meets Washington's standards by reviewing the Vehicle Emissions Control Information label in the vehicle's engine compartment. That label tells you if the vehicle has been approved for sale and registration in California and, by extension, Washington.

Does Washington ban the sale of gas- and diesel-powered vehicles?

No. Our regulations don't require individuals or businesses to purchase specific types of vehicles, nor do they stop or prevent anyone from continuing to operate a gas- or diesel-powered vehicle in Washington now or in the future. The standards don't require anyone to get rid of their existing car, and they don't affect used car sales (a car is considered used after 7,500 miles).

[2] https://ev-map-wsdot.hub.arcgis.com/

[3] https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/documents/2614015.pdf

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tripled

the number of charging stations in the state since 2014.

As of 2026, the state has more than

2,000

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6,000

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Questions?

Email CleanVehicles@ecy.wa.gov

ADA Accessibility

To request an ADA accommodation, email CleanVehicles@ecy.wa.gov, call 564-233-1572, or visit https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility. For Relay Service or TTY call 711 or 877-833-6341.

To learn more...

Visit ecology.wa.gov/cleanvehicles or scan the QR code below.

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