



Clean Air Cash

Financial incentives for driving zero emission electric cars

BY LYNN WALFORD

BESIDES THE FANTASTIC gift you give to the planet by driving a zero emissions electric vehicle there are many rebates, incentives and perks given by states and municipalities. Many people ask where is the best place to drive and own an electric car? The answer is it depends on what kind of rebate your prefer and what kind of driving you do.

FEDERAL INCENTIVE

Everyone in the United States who is the original registered owner of an electric vehicle is eligible for up to a \$7500 tax credit on their Federal Income Tax. The credit is based on the battery size and determined by the Department of Energy Fuel Economy. For leased vehicles the leasing company claims

the credit. On top of this tax credit other incentives further reduce the cost of owning an electric vehicle.

SHOW ME THE MONEY REBATES

If you like your incentive in the form of a rebate, the top rebate incentive for purchase or lease comes from Maryland for to up to \$3,000. Massachusetts, Texas and California offer rebates up to \$2,500 for the purchase or lease of plug-in hybrid light-duty vehicles.

The state of Pennsylvania offers a rebate of \$2,000 for each qualifying alternative fuel vehicle.

STATE TAX CREDITS

The greatest income tax credits are in Colorado with tax credits up to \$6,000, followed by Louisiana (up to \$3,000) and Utah (up to \$1,500)

OTHER KINDS OF SALES TAX INCENTIVES

New Jersey exempts its sales and use tax (7%) for purchases or leases of electric vehicles, while Washington state does not charge the 6.5% sales tax on the sale or lease of electric vehicles.

Virginia reduces personal property taxes on electric vehicles.

REGIONAL, CITY AND UTILITY REBATES

Sometimes cities, counties or utilities offer incentives. The San Joaquin Valley offers rebate vouchers up to \$3,000. The City of Riverside in California offers a \$500 rebate for fully electric EVs. The utility, JEA (formerly Jacksonville Electric Authority) offers rebates of \$500 or \$1000 for Plug-in Electric Vehicles based

upon battery power. Some major utilities in California such as PG&E in the Bay Area are considering rebates, as of this writing.

EVs don't necessarily drive faster than gas-guzzling cars on commuting highways however, single individual drivers can pass by other commuters using the in the car pool or HOV (High Occupancy Vehicle) lane in several states that offer HOV access to qualified zero emission and electric vehicles. (HOV: AZ, CA, GA, FL HI, MD, NJ, NV, NY(Long Island Expressway), NC, TN, UT, VA). Driving in the HOV lane can cut down energy use and your precious time on the road.

Players of Monopoly know how important free parking is and EVs get free parking in Sacramento, San Jose, Santa Monica, New Haven, Hawaii, Nevada and Salt Lake City. Arizona allows EVs to park in carpool lots.

There are even incentives for

low-income green car buyers. The most generous offer for owners of old clunkers that don't pass a smog check or that are over ten-years old and gas powered, who want to go green is in Texas. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality offers the AirCheckTexas, Drive a Clean Machine program. It provides vouchers of \$3,500 to qualified low-income individuals in certain areas for the purchase of electric, hybrid or natural gas vehicles.

Be sure to check with your local utility for reduced electricity rates and rebates for installing EV chargers.

Even private employers are providing some incentives for driving a zero emission car. Bank of America gives employees a \$3,000 incentive to go green. Many companies around the country have employee incentives ranging from cash to workplace charging.

No matter where you live there

are great Federal incentives for buying an electric vehicle.

Don't put off filing your forms, because some states require filing the rebate forms within weeks of buying the car. In many cases, your auto dealer will help you with the rebate forms right at the time of purchase.

When is the best time to buy? Don't wait too long because some incentives expire or disappear.

EV buyers in Georgia who decided to wait were frustrated when a \$5,000 tax credit was cancelled and a \$300 EV tax imposed. Ouch! In Illinois, a rebate of up to \$4000 disappeared from the Illinois Green Fleets website in March, leaving only reduced registration fees for EVs of \$35 for a 2-year registration or \$18 for 1-year registration.

Lynn Walford is the editor of AUTO Connected Car News and lives in one of the states with the most EV incentives, California. 🚗



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