

EDUCATION

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Curtis Thayer
Alaska Energy Authority
813 W Northern Lights Blvd
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Executive Director Thayer,

As a strong advocate for decarbonization, I support the choice that millions of people across the world have made to drive electric vehicles. Unfortunately, the adoption of electric vehicles (EV) in Alaska has been slowed by a lack of reliable charging stations. Alaska is the land of long distances, and it is time to rapidly expand electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure across the state to ensure fair and equitable access to Alaska's roads and highways.

Thankfully, there is substantial funding behind the President's ambitious goal of building a network of EV charging stations across the nation. As a result, Alaska is slated to receive at least \$52 million in federal funding over the next five years for new EV charging stations through the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure grant program.

With all this in mind, I applaud the efforts of the Alaska Energy Authority (AEA) and the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT & PF) in updating the Alaska Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Plan which will unlock the millions in federal funding; however, I have some significant concerns. By focusing considerable resources on Phase 1 of the plan, which builds out the EV infrastructure along a designated Alternative Fuel Corridor from Anchorage to Fairbanks, AEA and DOT&PF miss a significant opportunity to leverage and expand on existing EV infrastructure in Anchorage and the surrounding areas. Building out the EV infrastructure from Fairbanks down to Anchorage is a laudable goal but given the limited amount of federal funding and the long distance between the two cities I argue that it would make better economic sense to focus your efforts on Anchorage and surrounding areas first, followed by the designated Alternative Fuel Corridor. Ensuring reliability of EV charging stations in an area with the fastest growing adoption rate statewide means more Alaskans will become exposed to and familiar with the technology of electric vehicles, which in turns encourages growth.

I am also elated by the stated intent to use the most recent technology related to charging speeds. The new electric charging stations supported through the plan and the federal funding will be

built using the North American Charging Standard, which I and many others anticipate will become the long-term standard for charging electric vehicles. It is also important to update the plan as technological advances are made, which allows for flexibility and nimbleness when it comes to widespread adoption of EVs statewide. Currently, the range of electric vehicles can decrease by up to 50 percent in temperatures from -20 degrees Fahrenheit to 5 degrees Fahrenheit. As battery technology advances, I anticipate the range loss in extreme cold weather will be lessened. Those kinds of technological advancements should be noted in future iterations of the plan.

I am especially thankful that the federal funding will be distributed according to the Justice40 Initiative, which calls for 40 percent of the benefits of the program to go to disadvantaged communities. This decision will help ensure that the economic benefits of expanding and creating electric vehicle charging stations is shared fairly and that the bureaucracy of government is not manipulated to the benefit of the well off and those with political sway.

The plan notes that the Alaska Energy Authority is investigating ways to alleviate the burden on site hosts for an electric vehicle charging station to come up with 20 percent in matching funds to unlock the federal funding. Based on current cost estimates, this could force a local small business working to get into the electric vehicle charging market to come up with over \$200,000. This is cost prohibitive, especially to those who live in disadvantaged communities. I plan to work through the legislative process to identify additional state funding that could be used to offset the start-up costs placed on those small businesses.

Finally, I am thankful that the Alaska Energy Authority and the State Department of Transportation and Public Facilities will abide by the Buy America requirements issued for the program as part of President Biden's commitment to requiring 75 percent of goods purchased with taxpayer money to come from the U.S.

Currently there are over 1,800 electric vehicles registered in Alaska and that number is only going to climb as EV technology advances and more people decide to do their part to start a culture of decarbonization. It is time to quickly expand the EV infrastructure in Alaska.

Thank you for considering my comments and please let me know if I can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

Sen. Löki Gale Tobin
Member, Senate Transportation Committee
Alaska State Legislature

CC: DOT&PF Commissioner Ryan Anderson
Senate Transportation Committee members
House Transportation Committee members
Tyson Gallagher, Chief of Staff for Governor Dunleavy