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Electric vehicle development and infrastructure would save money, strengthen Ohio economy, report finds

Ohio is well positioned to be a key player in the supply chain for electric vehicles, according to a new report released today by Policy Matters Ohio. Other states, however, are working harder to develop the next generation of automobiles by promoting early adoption of the technology.

The state can help drive demand with fleet requirements and smart incentives that come with strong standards and accountability. In the past, the Ohio Department of Transportation has used flexible federal funds to support green transit vehicle adoption.

In 2010, Ohioans spent \$45 billion on energy. Nearly half of it went to fuel for cars, trucks and buses, and nearly all of it went to import oil.

“Ohio can reduce its dependence on imported oil by promoting electric vehicles, buses, passenger rail and freight rail,” said Amanda Woodrum, Policy Matters researcher and report author.

“Electric vehicle adoption in Ohio offers a tremendous opportunity for consumers to save money on fuel costs and maintenance over the life of the vehicle,” said Cynthia Maves of Clean Fuels Ohio, the leading advocate for electric vehicles in the state. “This savings will have a positive impact on Ohio’s economy.”

Smart local policies can make a difference, too. Exciting examples include aggregated power purchase in Cincinnati, community-wide green development in Oberlin, Sustainable Cleveland 2019, and the city of Cuyahoga Falls’ Community Energy Strategic Plan. In these cities, electric vehicles will be running on up to 100 percent clean power, much of it from domestic resources.

Key findings

- Ohioans spend 10 percent of state gross domestic product on energy, half on transportation; 98 percent of the oil we use is imported.
- States have adopted policies to drive demand for electric vehicles and reduce petroleum dependency.
- Ohio is well positioned to be a key player in the EV supply chain, but other states are working harder to develop this new industry.
- Several Ohio communities, including Oberlin, Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Cuyahoga Falls are using municipal aggregation and municipal utility power to increase use of local clean energy, thus keeping energy dollars local.

The state of Ohio can support local efforts and the development of the state's electric-vehicle supply chain by:

- Creating a Transportation Choice fund in the state transportation budget;
- Expanding Ohio's Advanced Energy Fund and using it to provide grants, rebates, vouchers and low-interest loans to promote the adoption of electric vehicles;
- Protecting and expanding state clean energy laws;
- Identifying existing Ohio manufacturers that can participate in the electric vehicle supply chain, helping them retool to meet the needs of the industry, and investing in related research and development.

“We can use smart policy to ensure that Ohio uses homegrown electricity from cleaner energy sources to fuel our cars and trucks in the future,” said Woodrum. “Ohio has many opportunities, but other states are working harder to develop this new industry.”

To join Clean Fuels Ohio and the Great Lakes Energy Task Force for the EV Readiness Workshop in Cleveland tomorrow (May 9), and get engaged in the Drive Electric Ohio initiative, register here: www.evreadiness-workshop.eventbrite.com.

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Policy Matters Ohio is a nonprofit, nonpartisan state policy research institute with offices in Cleveland and Columbus. Clean Fuels Ohio, a statewide nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting the use of cleaner, domestic fuels and efficient vehicles, developed the Drive Electric Ohio initiative to advance the adoption and deployment of electric vehicles for both passenger and fleet vehicles in Ohio. www.driveelectricohio.org/evplan/.