

# [***Biden is doubling down on the dream that Americans will, one day, actually want electric cars***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BKW-TPP1-JBSS-S004-00000-00&context=1516831)

CNN Wire

March 21, 2024 Thursday 10:00 AM GMT

Copyright 2024 Cable News Network All Rights Reserved

**Length:** 747 words

**Byline:** Analysis by Allison Morrow, CNN

**Dateline:** (CNN)

**Body**

New York (CNN) &#8212; The Biden administration is banking on the old "if you build it they will come" approach to cudgel the auto industry away from gas-burning cars. It also seems to recognize a giant problem at the heart of the long-awaited EV revolution: Americans don't really want them.

See here: [*The EPA on Wednesday released stringent tailpipe emission rules*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/03/20/climate/epa-biden-electric-cars/index.html) that aim to limit how much carbon dioxide and other pollutants cars and trucks can produce, starting with model year 2027.

The new rules mark a political win for Biden, who's made the EV transition a signature item in his climate agenda, and a practical win for automakers, who've been lobbying the administration for a bit more time and flexibility when it comes to reaching electric sales targets.

The automakers successfully batted down the administration's initial goal of having fully electric cars account for 60% of all new-vehicle sales by the end of this decade. (Under the new rules, the administration is allowing plug-in hybrids to play a bigger role in the electric transition.)

The changes reflect the rather disappointing reality of EVs in America in 2024. After an earlier burst of enthusiasm, car makers are now drastically scaling back their EV ambitions.

It's not that EVs aren't selling - in fact, sales are going up each year. But they aren't booming the way the industry or the Biden administration had hoped. Last year, EVs made up just 7.6% of new car sales, according to Kelley Blue Book.

So what happened? Why hasn't the EV revolution taken root?

Analysts point to a few key reasons, as my colleague [*Peter Valdes-Dapena wrote*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/02/25/cars/what-happened-with-electric-vehicle-sales-in-2023/index.html) last month.

EVs cost more

EVs are still on the expensive end of the auto market in America, and that's kept demand fairly limited to people who are willing to pay a premium for electric.

But even if carmakers could magically make it so that all of their vehicles were available in either gas or electric forms for the exact same price, you'd still see consumers shunning electric because ...

The charging problem

The vast majority of EV charging is happening at home, in the garage, a fact that compounds the "EVs are for rich people" problem. If you don't have a garage, like tens of millions of people living in cities, your ability to reliably charge your vehicle is severely curtailed.

There are currently fewer than 40,000 public charging stations, according to the Department of Energy, and about a quarter of those are in California. We need to multiply that by five to accommodate the EVs that are expected to be on the road in 2030.

Automakers are trying to help on that front. Virtually all of them have agreed to adopt the same charging standard used by Tesla, which is still the largest seller of EVs.

But there's a long, long way to go before drivers can trust that no matter where they're headed they'll be able to plug in if needed.

Credit confusion

Buy an EV, you can get a tax credit! That's one of those things marketers say and then no one really understands what it means.

It's true there are substantial tax credits available to help offset the cost of an EV. But it's not as simple as checking a box on TurboTax. In the hodgepodge of incentives, some come with restrictions on where the vehicle is built, how much it costs and how much household income you make.

They're weird and kinda crash-y

In many ways, there is little difference between driving an internal combustion-powered vehicle and an electric model like a Tesla. But there are some key differences that have been known to flummox new drivers.

And there's data to back that up. When people switch from gas-powered cars to EVs, they [*tend to crash more*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/18/business/why-do-people-keep-crashing-teslas/index.html?), according to research by LexisNexis Risk Solutions, which analyzed insurance data.

EVs aren't going to save us

The goal of replacing all of our gas-powered cars with EVs is both good ***politics*** and good policy in the effort to reduce emissions. Biden gets to promote green tech while also propping up an all-American, job-creating industry. Win-win.

But it's hardly a panacea.

"America's EV plan was flawed from the start," technology writer Paris Marx [*wrote for Business Insider*](https://www.businessinsider.com/electric-car-ev-sales-prices-problem-transportation-2024-1) earlier this year. "If the government and automakers are serious about making transportation more sustainable, they should be incentivizing smaller vehicles, hybrid cars, and public transportation like trains and buses."

Analysis by Allison Morrow, CNN

TM & © 2024 Cable News Network, Inc., a Time Warner Company. All rights reserved.

**Load-Date:** March 21, 2024

**End of Document**