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Headline: Environment groups say e-vehicles need more than market incentives

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File photo of an electric vehicle being charged. REUTERS/Mark Blinch/File Photo

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MANILA, Philippines — “The shift to electric vehicles is vital in addressing the prevailing climate crisis,” thus said several environmental groups following the introduction of electric vehicles in the country, which is necessary to address climate-related issues.

However, the Climate Reality Project – Philippines (TCRP) said that this initiative needs more support from the government in terms of policy-making and power generation.

TCRP said in a joint statement with the Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities (ICSC), that the country must also ensure the transition to renewable energy and enable public infrastructure for people’s mobility.

This came after the release of Executive Order No. 12 series of 2023 where tariff rates for electric vehicles (EVs) and other components were modified to help promote the shift from gas-fueled to electrically-propelled vehicles.

Under EO12, different types of EVs have received tax breaks with the exclusion of electric motorcycles which are still subject to 30 percent import duty.

“The shift to electric vehicles is vital in addressing the prevailing climate crisis. However, electrification is only ideal when the source of electrification is renewable energy; and when we can provide affordable, stable, and flexible electricity rates for every Filipino household,” Nazrin Camille Castro, TCRP executive, said.

According to Statista Research Department, the power production in the Philippines is still dominated by coal at 47.6 percent, followed by other fossils at 18 percent, and gas at 10.7 percent, which totals 76.3 percent.

Various types of renewable energy generation like wind, solar, bioenergy, hydro, and other renewables share at 23.7 percent of the country’s total power source.

“We can accelerate the renewable energy transition by ending policies that allow fossil fuel companies to pass the higher costs of imported coal on to the consumers and create an enabling environment for more renewable energy producers,” Castro said.

“We need to approach electrification of vehicles not just through market incentives, but address vital points where electric vehicles’ potential can really address hardworking commuters’ needs which include secure, flexible, reliable, and affordable energy via renewables; and systematically address congestion by enabling public infrastructure for people’s mobility, not cars,” Castro added.

Castro also said that the country should also fix its car-centric infrastructure which makes up 80 percent of road spaces by making it sustainable and climate-friendly by creating more bike lanes, walkways, and green spaces.

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