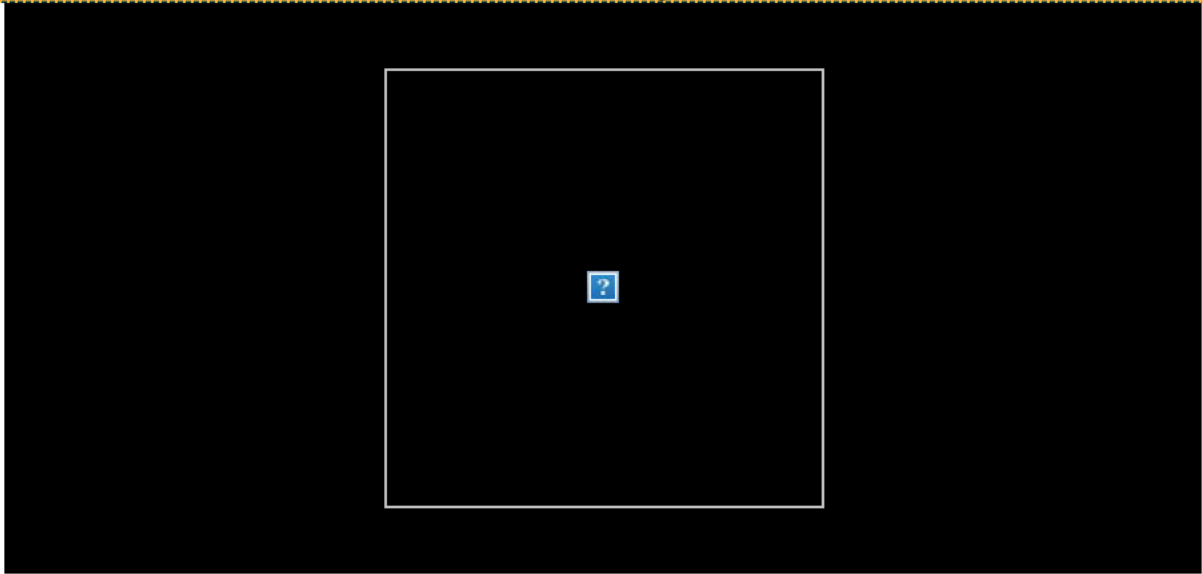


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Subject: Fw: White House to feds: Rent EVs, take the bus
Date: Thursday, December 14, 2023 6:45:47 PM

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White House to feds: Rent EVs, take the bus

BY ROBIN BRAVENDER | 12/14/2023 04:21 PM EST



White House senior adviser John Podesta speaks at an event at Washington's Union Station on Thursday as administration officials announce new travel guidance for federal employees. | Robin Bravender/E&E News

In a bid to shrink the U.S. government's carbon footprint, the Biden administration is directing federal employees to prioritize lower-emission options when they travel for work.

New guidance from the administration aims to slash greenhouse gas emissions by prioritizing federal employees' use of electric vehicles, rail travel and public transit, the White House announced.

"We're adding another element to consider when federal employees travel on government business," Robin Carnahan, who leads the General Services Administration, said Thursday at a news conference in a parking garage at

Washington's Union Station.

Federal workers will consider what's "most expeditious, most cost-effective and most sustainable," Carnahan added. "That's a big change from what we had before. And as we are the largest employer in the country and have about a \$2.8 billion-spend every year on travel, we know that when cleaner options are involved, that will make a difference."

In 2022, federal workers took more than 2.8 million flights, rented 2.3 million vehicles and took 33,000 rail trips, according to the White House.

Under the new guidelines, federal workers will rent EVs on official trips when the costs are less than or equal to the most affordable comparable vehicle, and they'll opt for cost-competitive EVs when using taxis and ride-share platforms. Federal employees will also use rail for trips less than 250 miles when it's cost-effective, rather than taking planes or vehicles. And federal workers will use public transit — such as subways, buses or light rail — for local travel.

To advance their efforts, the government is "going to try to make it easier for federal employees to be able to book these kinds of travel choices and also continue to negotiate good prices with the providers," Carnahan said.

Carnahan was joined at the event by White House Council on Environmental Quality Chair Brenda Mallory and White House energy and climate adviser John Podesta. The announcement comes after the Biden administration set a goal to achieve net-zero emissions across federal operations by 2050.

The administration also announced a series of commitments from companies and nonprofits Thursday that aim to boost EVs and cut greenhouse gas emissions.

Amtrak, the White House announced, is committed to transitioning its fleet of highway vehicles to zero emissions by 2035. Hertz is committed to boosting its EV rentals to corporate travelers in North America, and Zipcar plans to increase its EV fleet in the United States.

The environmental groups Environmental Defense Fund, Natural Resources Defense Council and Sierra Club pledged to prioritize lower-emission modes of business travel, the White House said.

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