

Washington state EV rebate program a failure

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Washington state’s [Electric Vehicle \(EV\) rebate program](#) has been demonstrated to be a “failure,” falling far short of promises to deliver environmental results and help middle-income people buy [EVs](#).

The Washington Policy Center, which published the “[Results of Washington’s EV Instant Rebate](#)” study, said in a press release, “For every \$1 of subsidy provided in Washington state’s Electric Vehicle (EV) rebate program, the people of Washington receive just over one penny’s worth of environmental benefit.”

Todd Myers, Vice President for Research at Washington Policy Center and the study’s author, wrote, “The more concerned we are about [climate change](#), the more we should oppose wasteful policies like the EV subsidies, which do virtually nothing for the planet. Data from this program paints a clear picture of failure across the board. State leadership has a chance to use this data to learn and move on to programs that actually work.”

On Earth Day of 2024, then-Governor Jay Inslee (D) unveiled the \$45 million program, which was designed to provide incentives for middle-income families to buy EVs and plug-in hybrids (PHEVs), promising that the program would be “opening the door to EVs for people of modest incomes.” The state’s Department of Commerce said at the time that the program could “lead to a reduction of up to 24,000 metric tons of CO2 emissions in the transportation sector.”

However, the study found the program achieved just over half of the promised sales and that the average income of the zip codes where vehicles were purchased was virtually identical to sales before the rebate. The average

household income of the zip codes where rebate-eligible EVs were sold was \$118,816, only a slight decline from the average household income of \$122,601 in the months before the rebate was available.

Additionally, potential CO2 reductions were much smaller than expected, equivalent to about 0.03 percent of Washington's transportation-related emissions for one year, at a cost nearly 86 times greater than the state's current CO2 price.

Myers told The Ari Hoffman Show on Talk Radio 570 KVI, "The EV subsidy is so poor at cutting CO2 emissions, it is like paying \$2,072 for a latte."

The rebates increased new EV sales by an estimated 3,477, used sales by about 1,163, and electric trucks by about 187, for a total of 4,788, far below the Department of Commerce's initial projection of up to 8,767 additional vehicles. Sales of new PHEVs dropped by an estimated 344 vehicles but used PHEV sales increased by 305 vehicles.

Due to the lower sales, the CO2 reductions were also much smaller than expected, reducing lifetime emissions by only 13,030 metric tons – equivalent to about 0.03 percent of Washington's annual transportation-related emissions.

Additionally, the cost of the program to reduce emissions was "astronomical," \$3,453.57 to reduce one metric ton of CO2, nearly 86 times as much as the state's current CO2 price, meaning that for every \$1 of subsidy, Washingtonians received just over a penny's worth of environmental benefit.

The most popular vehicle among those who used the rebate was the [Tesla](#) Model 3, which saw sales double, selling 1,191 more vehicles than expected based on sales in 2024 prior to the rebates. However, through October 2024, EVs and plug-in hybrids accounted for 21.8 percent of new

vehicle sales in the Evergreen State, only slightly above the 2023 level of 20.5 percent and well below the 35 percent level that will be required in 2026.