

Selling Texans on electric vehicles may be uphill climb

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Ever more electric vehicles can be spotted these days on the urban roads of Texas. But switching the whole state from gas tanks to batteries is looking like a tough sell.

That is what 2,067 respondents to the Texas Trends Survey, conducted by the University of Houston Hobby School of Public Affairs and the

Texas Southern University Jordan-Leland School of Public Affairs, had to say about going electric—now and any time in the future. Specifically, the [survey](#) asked:

- Do you currently own or lease an electric vehicle?
- Would you consider buying or leasing an electric vehicle now or in the future?
- Why would you not consider buying or leasing a vehicle powered only by electricity?
- What do you think about three potential policies aimed at promoting [electric vehicles](#)?

"With a legacy as the nation's largest energy producer, from both traditional and [renewable sources](#), Texas has potential to lead America's exploration of alternatives such as electric vehicles. But is the EV movement gaining ground in the state? This survey gives us a glimpse of what Texans are thinking today," said Carroll Robinson, TSU associate professor of political science and co-principal investigator of the TSU National Transportation Security Center of Excellence–Petrochemical Transportation Security.

Among [survey respondents](#), only 11% said they were "very likely" to ever buy or lease a vehicle powered only by electricity in the future, 30% said they would "never" do so. Less than 10% were already driving an electric-powered car, truck or van.

"How you answer that question depends on your generation. In our survey, almost half the Gen Z'ers (ages 19–25) and a little more than a third of the Millennials (ages 26–41) replied they were likely, at least somewhat, to purchase an electric vehicle in the future. But three-quarters of Baby Boomers (ages 58–76) and the Silent Generation (ages 77–94) said they were not so likely," said Gail Buttorff, co-director of the Survey Research Institute at the UH Hobby School of Public Affairs.

Why Not Electric?

The cost of electric vehicles was often cited (by 57% of survey respondents, overall) as the main reason for not entertaining the idea of buying or leasing an electric-powered vehicle. Scarcity of charging stations (53% of overall respondents) was the second most selected reason.

"Dividing along politics, a preference for gas vehicles was cited by almost twice as many Republicans (49%) as Democrats or Independents (28% in each case). Mileage range per charge was a concern of more Republicans and Independents (40% each) than Democrats (29%)," said Michael O. Adams, professor of political science and founding director of the Executive Master of Public Administration program at the Jordan-Leland School of Public Affairs.

Driving Public Policy

When it comes to powering up interest in electric vehicles, the survey discussed three potential public-policy actions. Most popular among them was a potential federal tax rebate, which drew support from three-fifths of total respondents.

Almost three-quarters of respondents at least somewhat supported creating, by 2035, a Texas network of electric-vehicle charging stations that would be comparable to the country's current network of gas stations. Millennial (73%) and Gen Z (72%) generations were the most ardent supporters of growing the network.

Least liked among the three was a suggested requirement that all new vehicles sold be electric powered by 2035. That idea that drew 40% overall support.

About the Survey

See the complete [Texas Trends Survey / Electric Vehicles](#) report for clarification on how the electric [vehicle](#) is not winning over the Lone Star State—at least not so far. Read also about how opinions vary across gender, race/ethnicity, generation and partisan divides.

The survey of 2,067 was conducted Oct. 4–21, 2021, by YouGov for the UH Hobby School of Public Affairs and the TSU Jordan-Leland School of Public Affairs and has a margin of error of $\pm 2.2\%$ at the 95% confidence level.

More information: Texas Trends Survey: Electric Vehicles
[uh.edu/hobby/txtrends/texas tr ... electric vehicle.pdf](https://uh.edu/hobby/txtrends/texas_tr...electric_vehicle.pdf)

Provided by University of Houston

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