

States charge more for electric cars as new laws take effect

December 30 2019, by David A. Lieb



In this Friday, Dec. 20, 2019, photo, Neda Deylami poses for a portrait while charging her electric vehicle at a Chicago area grocery store. Owners of electric vehicles in a number of states will start seeing fees to pay for road repairs in the new year. At least eight states will begin charging new or higher registration fees Wednesday, Dec. 25, for electric vehicles or plug-in hybrids. "It's kind of a blanket penalty for anyone who chooses to go electric," said Deylami, a Tesla owner who founded Chicago for EVs, a group that advocates for electric vehicles. (AP Photo/Charles Rex Arbogast)

The new year will bring new charges for some owners of electric vehicles, as an increasing number of states seek to plug in to fresh revenue sources to offset forgone gas taxes.

In Hawaii, the charge will be \$50. In Kansas, \$100. In Alabama and Ohio, \$200.

New or higher registration fees go into effect Wednesday for electric [vehicle](#) owners in at least eight states. For the first time, a majority of U.S. states will impose special fees on gas-free cars, SUVs and trucks—a significant milestone as the trend toward green technology intersects with the mounting need to pay for upgrades and repairs to the nation's infrastructure.

Though electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles comprised less than 2% of new vehicle sales in 2018, their market share is projected to rise substantially in the coming decade. State officials hope the new fees will make up for at least part of the lost gas tax revenue that is essential to their road and bridge programs.

"I think states are still trying to determine what is a fair or equitable fee on these electric vehicle owners," said Kristy Hartman, energy program director at the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Imposing fees on electric vehicles is one of several societal trends reflected in laws taking effect in 2020.



In this Friday, Dec. 20, 2019, photo shows a designated parking space for electric vehicles at a Chicago area grocery store. Owners of electric vehicles in a number of states will start seeing fees to pay for road repairs in the new year. At least eight states will begin charging new or higher registration fees Wednesday, Dec. 25, for electric vehicles or plug-in hybrids. (AP Photo/Charles Rex Arbogast)

Twenty-one states will raise their minimum wage, including several to \$12 an hour or more. Illinois will become the 11th state to legalize recreational marijuana for adults. And California will join about 10 states that enacted measures this past year relaxing deadlines to sue or prosecute for prior sexual abuse—a reaction to the ongoing sexual abuse scandal in the Roman Catholic Church.

Until now, the federal government and some states have offered incentives to people to buy electric vehicles. But federal tax credits are phasing out for some of the most popular models made by Tesla and General Motors, and some states also are switching course.

Illinois, for example, had offered a two-year license plate for electric vehicles for \$35, a sizable discount over its basic \$98 annual registration fee. Under a law that raised both registration fees and fuel taxes, electric vehicle owners will have to pay the new basic annual rate of \$148, plus an additional \$100 intended to offset the lost fuel taxes.

"It's kind of a blanket penalty for anyone who chooses to go electric," said Neda Deylami, a Tesla owner who founded Chicago for EVs, a group that advocates for electric vehicles.



In this Friday, Dec. 20, 2019, photo Neda Deylami poses for a portrait while charging her electric vehicle at a Chicago area grocery store. Owners of electric vehicles in a number of states will start seeing fees to pay for road repairs in the new year. At least eight states will begin charging new or higher registration fees Wednesday, Dec. 25, for electric vehicles or plug-in hybrids. "It's kind of a blanket penalty for anyone who chooses to go electric," said Deylami, a Tesla owner who founded Chicago for EVs, a group that advocates for electric vehicles. (AP Photo/Charles Rex Arbogast)

Three-quarters of the revenue from Alabama's new \$200 fee on electric vehicles and \$100 fee for plug-in hybrids will go to fund state and local roads and bridges. The other quarter will fund grants for electric charging infrastructure, and will expire once electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles surpass 4% of all vehicles in the state.

The fee is designed to bring "more than just a fairness relative to maintenance and construction of infrastructure," said Alabama state Rep. Bill Poole, a Republican, who sponsored the legislation. "I think it went further in terms of planning for the future."

Because average commuting distances vary by vehicle owner, it's difficult to set a universally fair fee for electric vehicles, said Loren McDonald, a California-based industry analyst who runs the website EV Adoption.

"States are actually being very reasonable about this," McDonald said, noting that some are charging less than what vehicle owners might otherwise pay for fuel taxes.



In this March 2, 2019, file photo, Chloe Compton, center, joins dozens of others in a demonstration outside the Sacramento Police Department protesting the decision to not prosecute the two Sacramento Police officers involved in the 2018 fatal shooting of Stephon Clark, in Sacramento, Calif. The shooting death of Clark helped spur the passage of two laws to take effect in 2020 giving California one of the nation's most comprehensive approaches to deterring shootings by police. (AP Photo/Rich Pedroncelli, File)

Other states with new or higher electric vehicle fees taking effect in 2020 include Iowa, Oregon and Utah. California, which accounts for nearly half of all electric vehicle sales in the U.S., is to collect a \$100 fee

on new "zero-emission" vehicles starting July 1.

Some other notable laws set to take effect Wednesday include:

POLICE USE-OF-FORCE

The nation's oldest law governing when police can use deadly force is being revamped in California to become what the American Civil Liberties Union describes as one of the strongest in the U.S. California's previous law allowed deadly force when officers had "reasonable fear" for their safety. The new law will allow it only when necessary to defend against an imminent threat of death or serious injury to officers or bystanders, but it doesn't include a definition of "necessary."



In this April 4, 2018, file photo, protesters calling for the indictment of the two Sacramento police officers who shot and killed Stephon Clark as they responded to a vandalism report, march through downtown Sacramento, Calif. The shooting death of Clark helped spur the passage of two laws to take effect in 2020, giving California one of the nation's most comprehensive approaches to deterring shootings by police. (AP Photo/Rich Pedroncelli, File)

Another new California law increases officers' training on handling confrontations. The changes come after Sacramento police in 2018 fatally shot Stephon Clark, a 22-year-old black vandalism suspect, leading to major protests.

VACCINATIONS

A new California law will create greater state oversight of doctors who write medical exemptions for school children's vaccinations. The law generated passionate legislative debate and drew hundreds of supporters and opponents to the Capitol this past year. It will allow the state to investigate doctors who grant more than five medical exemptions in a year and schools with vaccination rates under 95%, the threshold that experts say means a population is resistant to a disease such as measles. The law will phase out existing medical exemptions over the coming years.

GUNS



In this March 27, 2018, file photo Stevante Clark stands on a desk as he shouts the name of his brother Stephon Clark, who was fatally shot by police a week earlier, during a meeting of the Sacramento City Council, in Sacramento, Calif. The shooting death of Stephon Clark helped spur the passage of two laws to take effect in 2020 giving California one of the nation's most comprehensive approaches to deterring shootings by police. (AP Photo/Rich Pedroncelli, File)

A Colorado "red flag" law will allow family, household members or law enforcement to petition a court to have guns seized from people deemed a threat to themselves or others. A seizure can be extended to 364 days, and the burden of proof is on the gun owner to get firearms back.

The law was championed by Democratic Rep. Tom Sullivan, whose son,

Alex Sullivan, was killed in the 2012 Aurora movie theater shooting. Some Republican lawmakers and the group Rocky Mountain Gun Owners have sued to try to block the law, and about 12 of the state's 64 counties have passed resolutions declaring themselves 2nd Amendment "sanctuaries" in response to it. Some sheriffs have said they won't enforce the court orders.

By contrast, a Tennessee law could allow people to more easily get permits to carry concealed guns. The law creates a less-expensive permit option that doesn't require live-fire training and instead allows people to take an online firearms training or safety course.

IMMIGRATION



In this April 4, 2018, file photo, protesters stand outside the office of Sacramento County District Attorney Anne Marie Schubert calling for the indictment of two Sacramento police officers in the shooting death of Stephon Clark, during a rally in Sacramento, Calif. The shooting death of Clark helped spur the passage of two laws to take effect in 2020 giving California one of the nation's most comprehensive approaches to deterring shootings by police. One changes the legal standard for when police can use deadly force, while the companion law increased officers' training on how to handle confrontations. (AP Photo/Rich Pedroncelli, File)

Arkansas will become the latest state to wade into the national immigration debate with a new law cutting off discretionary state funding for "sanctuary" cities that don't cooperate with federal immigration authorities. Other Republican-led states have enacted similar laws. By contrast, several Democratic-led states have adopted sanctuary laws restricting local law enforcement officers from asking about people's immigration status or notifying federal authorities when an immigrant is about to be released from state custody.

VOTING

A North Carolina law will alter the process to request and fill out mail-in-absentee ballots in response to a fraud investigation of the 9th U.S. House District race in 2018 that led to a do-over election in 2019. Much of the new law targets a practice called "ballot harvesting," in which political operatives gathered hundreds of absentee ballots from voters and forged signatures or filled in votes. The new law will keep information confidential about people who request absentee ballots until the actual in-person election day.

OPIOIDS



In this Sept. 9, 2019, file photo, opponents of legislation to tighten the rules on giving exemptions for vaccinations, demonstrate outside the office of California Gov. Gavin Newsom in Sacramento, Calif. Newsom signed the bill, that will take effect in 2020, that allows officials to investigate doctors who grant more than five medical exemptions in a year and schools with vaccination rates under 95%. (AP Photo/Rich Pedroncelli, File)

At least seven states will begin requiring electronic prescriptions for controlled substances such as opioids. The movement to do away with handwritten prescriptions by doctors is one of many steps states have been taking to try to curb opioid addictions and overdoses.

New laws taking effect in Arizona, Iowa, Massachusetts, North Carolina,

Oklahoma, Rhode Island and Tennessee mean a dozen states will now have such laws. Virginia is to implement its law in July, and 13 additional states have passed electronic prescription laws that are to kick in during 2021.

PRIVACY

A California measure described as the nation's most sweeping data privacy law will require many companies to tell consumers, upon request, what personal data they collect about them, why it's collected and what other entities receive it. Consumers can ask companies to delete their personal information and not sell it. The law also prohibits companies from selling data related to children younger than 16 without consent. An economic analysis prepared for the state attorney general's office has estimated the total cost of initial compliance with the law at \$55 billion.



In this Sept. 4, 2019, file photo, demonstrators sitting in the state Senate gallery, give a thumbs-down on a measure aimed at cracking down on doctors who sell fraudulent medical exemptions for vaccinations as lawmakers debate the legislation in Sacramento, Calif. Gov. Gavin Newsom signed the bill, which will take effect in 2020, that allows officials to investigate doctors who grant more than five medical exemptions in a year and schools with vaccination rates under 95%. (AP Photo/Rich Pedroncelli, File)

Another new California law will bar police from using facial recognition software in body-worn cameras, a move that follows New Hampshire and Oregon.

An Illinois law seeks to shed light on the use of artificial intelligence during the hiring process. Employers who ask applicants to self-record video interviews and submit them for consideration will have to notify applicants and obtain their consent if they intend to use artificial intelligence to analyze the person's facial expressions or fitness for the position.

TAXES

Twenty years after voter approval, Massachusetts will enact the final reduction in a gradual state income tax cut. The 2000 ballot measure was to reduce the state's 5.95% tax rate to 5% by 2003. But lawmakers froze the rate at 5.3% in 2002 and passed a law allowing a more gradual step down to resume if the state hit certain revenue benchmarks. With those conditions satisfied, the tax rate is finally to fall to 5% in 2020.



In this Sept. 4, 2019, file photo, Denise Aguilar, right, joins others in a march through the Capitol to protest the state Legislature's passage of a measure to crack down on doctors who sell fraudulent medical exemptions for vaccinations, in Sacramento, Calif. Gov. Gavin Newsom signed the bill, which will take effect in 2020, that allows officials to investigate doctors who grant more than five medical exemptions in a year and schools with vaccination rates under 95%. (AP Photo/Rich Pedroncelli, File)



In this April 24, 2019, file photo, state Sen. Dr. Richard Pan, D-Sacramento, urges lawmakers to approve his proposed bill to give state public health officials instead of local doctors the power to decide which children can skip their shots before attending school, at the Capitol in Sacramento, Calif. Gov. Gavin Newsom signed Pan's bill, that will take effect in 2020, that allows officials to investigate doctors who grant more than five medical exemptions in a year and schools with vaccination rates under 95%. (AP Photo/Rich Pedroncelli, File)

In Missouri, a corporate income tax law signed in the final hours before former Gov. Eric Greitens resigned in May 2018 will go into effect in 2020. The law will cut Missouri's corporate income tax rate from 6.25% to 4%, making it one of the lowest rates in the nation. But another provision in the law will do away with an option for calculating corporate

income that could result in higher Missouri tax bills for some multi-state businesses.

PAID LEAVE

Employees in Washington can start applying for time off under the state's new paid family leave law. Businesses and workers have been paying into the program—approved by the Legislature in 2017—for the past year through premiums on wages. Starting in 2020, eligible workers can receive 12 weeks paid time off for the birth or adoption of a child or for a serious medical condition of the worker or a family member, or 16 weeks for a combination of both. Washington is the fifth state to launch a paid family leave law, to be followed by Washington, D.C., in July. Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine and Oregon have passed laws that take effect between 2021 and 2023.

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Citation: States charge more for electric cars as new laws take effect (2019, December 30)
retrieved 14 December 2025 from

<https://techxplore.com/news/2019-12-states-electric-cars-laws-effect.html>

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