

Torre Refuse & Recycling Spokane County

Ms. Harris,

Thank you for the opportunity to share our concerns about the state's mandatory rapid implementation of heavy-duty clean vehicles.

To be clear, we support the broader goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and are already taking many steps as a company and industry to make loads more efficient and trips fewer. Our concerns about electric vehicles are with an implementation timeline made unrealistic by the current lack of truck supply, extremely underbuilt infrastructure barely in its infancy, and the cost consumers will have to shoulder to overcome those severely limiting factors.

Solid waste collection vehicles, whether hauling garbage, recycling, or organics, typically carry 10-ton loads. Adding significant battery weight and reducing the overall physical capacity to carry the batteries to power the truck reduces hauling capacity by as much as a quarter by some estimates. That's before factoring in the increased drain on the battery from climate controls for driver comfort and the cargo weight that lessens vehicle range.

We serve 13,000 square miles over six counties with extreme seasonal climate conditions, including two of the state's largest legislative districts by geography. In some areas in rural Spokane County, where two routes exceed 200 miles and make only 20 and 9 stops – making the distance between driveways quite literally measured in tens of miles instead of feet – size and space matters.

And that's if you can even get a truck and charge one. Current times between order and delivery for electric trucks is years. Once trucks arrive, finding a way to charge them on route is nearly impossible meaning they will have to return to a central hub each time it requires a charge.

Increasing demand on an already burdened electrical grid is also concerning. Unlike other clean fuel alternatives, there is no redundancy to keep our fleet charged and ready to collect waste as an essential public health service should suggested brownouts become a reality to accommodate demand.

Less payload and shorter operating capacity puts more trucks on the road to do the same route. More trucks and more trips erode local roads and household budgets. In economically burdened communities, the cost of road maintenance and affordability of solid waste services are real issues.

We are concerned about the ever-increasing burden on household budget at a time when the recently completed legislative session placed significantly more burden on top of the already rising pressures on consumer goods. The cost of an electric-powered garbage truck is about half again as much as a diesel-powered truck, which will drive up collection rates.

None of the current limiting factors is insurmountable as businesses in our state have proven time and again with some of the biggest technology solutions. They just require time for technology and infrastructure to catch up with affordable solutions.

EVs make sense for many current light-duty uses where charging stations are more accessible, movements are predominantly a short in-town distances, and loads are limited to passenger trips. Implementation for larger format vehicles must take a much more intentional, methodical, and measured approach when public health and safety is at play.

Washington state has been a technology leader on many fronts due to appropriate research, development, and implementation timeline. We are asking that the state once again lead with a sensible, realistic approach to implementing emerging technology.

Sincerely,
Marc Torre
President
Torre Refuse & Recycling Spokane County