

Heidi Brooks

Sunday the Albuquerque Journal published an editorial in opposition to the proposed Advanced Clean Car and Truck rules. As an electric vehicle owner for over five years, my impression reading the editorial is that the editors were writing based somewhat on fear and lack of personal experience, with perhaps a bit of influence from the oil and gas industry and the automobile dealers.

I'm writing as a citizen who is very concerned about climate change. I love my electric vehicle (EV), and I know it is helping create a future with a livable planet. So I'll never go back to an internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicle. Informed people know that we absolutely must transition away from ICE vehicles to EVs as an essential step to reduce greenhouse gases in time to preserve the future livability of the planet.

At Monday's hearing, a number of people remarked that it is difficult to purchase an EV in New Mexico. I agree. I had to go to Colorado to purchase mine back in 2018. By requiring dealers to have inventories of EVs, these rules will ensure that EVs are readily available for New Mexicans to purchase. And once people start to purchase them and influence their friends to purchase them, I predict that just like me, they'll never go back, reducing future demand for ICE vehicles. So the idea that there will be reduced inventory of ICE vehicles shouldn't have to be a problem—there should also be reduced demand.

Moreover, we really need for there to be fewer ICE vehicles on the roads, so if they do happen to cost more, as feared by the editorial board, that would create desirable market pressure for people to buy EVs. Additionally, a state requirement to have certain levels of EV inventory will incentivize the auto industry to produce and make available to dealerships the EV models that people want to buy, which would need to include lower-priced models.

The editorial hypothesizes that local auto dealers will lose sales of ICE vehicles to other states if we don't have sufficient inventory. That is speculative, though it could happen. But probably not to a great degree, given the fantastic features, attractiveness (so zippy!) and cost savings of the upcoming EVs. It could also happen that if dealerships have great inventories of popular EVs, out-of-staters who can't find those models in their states will come here to buy them.

One effect that will almost certainly happen over time is that dealerships will perform far less maintenance on cars that they sell. That's unavoidable, since EVs require very little maintenance. But keeping up an income stream for those who maintain ICE vehicles is not a good enough reason to slow-walk the necessary transition to EVs. The gradual reduction in demand for maintenance of ICE vehicles could be managed with natural attrition and a shift to maintenance of EVs.

The editors say, however, that EVs are too expensive for most New Mexicans. But even at the price I paid, I'm confident that, with purchase price included, I spend far less on transportation over the life of my car than the average driver, due to low maintenance and operational costs. Statistics back me up on that: EV owners save between \$14,000 and \$16,800 during the life of the vehicle. Moreover, the editors have assumed that the cost of an EV today will always be the same. That's unlikely. Prices on EVs are predicted to come way down in the near future. Moreover, tax credits

will bring the price even farther down on qualifying models.

Additionally, when we think of the "cost" of driving an ICE vehicle, we need to take into account not just the sticker price, but also the staggering cost of the health problems they cause, the deaths, health emergencies, and chronic diseases from breathing ICE tailpipe emissions. EVs cut these costs to zero—a huge savings for all of us.

The editors also argue that EVs have limited range. I respond that I've taken my EV twice to Yosemite, California, and routinely travel back and forth from Albuquerque to Taos or Gallup, with no problem regarding range. They further say that places like Española have only one charging station. Yes, we certainly need to get more charging stations in all areas of our state (and available to apartment dwellers), but at the same time it should be clearly understood that most EV owners routinely charge at home, not at public charging stations. For example, in the five-plus years I've owned my EV I've charged at a public charger in my own city just twice, once to test it out and once because I failed to plan ahead. But even that was very cheap, compared to gasoline.

The editors also complain that, "Government mandates and tax rebates wouldn't be necessary if people actually wanted EVs. They'd sell themselves." They should have heard the enthusiasm of EV owners at the hearing and the press conference following Monday's noon meeting session! People tend to love them!

Furthermore, it seems to me that we as a society have, for example, encouraged water conservation and electricity conservation by offering rebates for water- and power-efficient appliances and fixtures. Rebates are a common way of achieving a necessary or desirable change. They are all the more needed to leverage a major change, such as moving to EV's, a technology unfamiliar to many people.

So I'm in favor of the proposed Advanced Clean Car and Trucks rules, which, contrary to the opinion expressed in the editorial, could be modified should that become necessary.