

Defend the Clean Cars Standards



The General Assembly adopted landmark legislation in 2021 requiring a Clean Cars Program for new passenger vehicles and light-duty trucks in Virginia (HB1965). The Air Pollution Control Board unanimously adopted the Clean Cars standards to implement this requirement in December 2021, and the standards went into effect in January 2024. Now, the Youngkin administration has announced that Virginia's Clean Cars Program will cease at the end of 2024.

The Clean Cars standards are required by law and offer significant environmental, health, consumer, and economic benefits. Any attempt to rollback these standards or dismantle Virginia's Clean Cars Program should be defeated.

What the Clean Cars Standards Do

The Clean Cars standards are the most important tool we have to cut tailpipe pollution. The standards only apply to vehicle manufacturers; there are no requirements auto dealers or individuals must meet. And they only apply to new passenger cars and light-duty trucks, not to used car sales or to medium- or heavy-duty vehicles or farm vehicles.

Under the Clean Cars standards, vehicle manufacturers will have to meet:

- Low-Emissions Vehicle (LEV) standards, which limit the average emissions from all passenger cars and light-duty trucks delivered for sale in Virginia. These average emission standards become more protective over time.
- Zero-Emissions Vehicle (ZEV) standards, which require a certain percentage of ZEVs be delivered for sale in Virginia (generally electric vehicles (EVs)). This percentage increases over time, and the standards should ensure that at least 8% of new car sales are EVs in 2024. Flexibility is built into the standards through banking and trading of credits to meet targets and even in 2035, when 100% of new vehicle sales must be ZEVs, up to 20% of those sales can be plug-in hybrid EVs with gas tanks.



Benefits

The Clean Cars standards will bring both cleaner gas-powered vehicles and a greater number and variety of ZEVs to the Commonwealth, providing multiple benefits:

Combat climate change

Transportation is the largest source of carbon pollution in Virginia — producing over 40% of our CO₂ emissions, and over half of that comes from passenger cars and other light-duty vehicles.¹ Electricity to power an EV in Virginia emits less than 17% of the CO₂ emitted by an equivalent gas car, and the grid will only get cleaner over time.² The Clean Cars standards are projected to reduce Virginia's CO₂ emissions by approximately 139.2 million metric tons from 2026 to 2040, as measured along the entire well-to-wheel lifecycle.³

Improve public health and equity

Widespread transition to EVs could, by 2050, yield more than \$1.3 billion in avoided annual health costs in Virginia and avoid 115 premature deaths, more than 1,780 asthma attacks, and nearly 8,190 lost workdays each year.⁴ And transportation pollution disproportionately harms low-wealth communities and communities of color.⁵

Expand consumer choice

Vehicle manufacturers prioritize sending EVs to states that have adopted Clean Cars standards. Even though nearly 70% of Virginia drivers would consider buying an EV in the near future,⁶ one-third of EVs registered in Virginia were purchased out of state before the Clean Cars standards went into effect.⁷

Save consumers money

Competitively priced EVs are already on the market and the price of many EVs are expected to soon reach parity with comparable gas-powered vehicles.⁸ Owning an EV also saves the typical driver \$6k-\$12k over the life of a vehicle compared to a fossil fuel-powered car due to reduced fuel and maintenance costs.⁹ EV drivers typically spend the equivalent of \$1.28 per gallon for a full charge,¹⁰ and a typical EV can be driven 150 to 400 miles before it needs to be recharged.¹¹

Apply to manufacturers, not dealers

Vehicle manufacturers, not dealers, must meet the Clean Cars standards. At least 15 major manufacturers have promised to electrify a significant portion of their vehicles by 2030, and others, like Honda, Mitsubishi, and Hyundai, aim to have



100% ZEV sales by 2040 or earlier.¹² As of 2021, all vehicle manufacturers have complied with the ZEV portion of the Clean Cars standards.¹³

Bring economic growth to Virginia

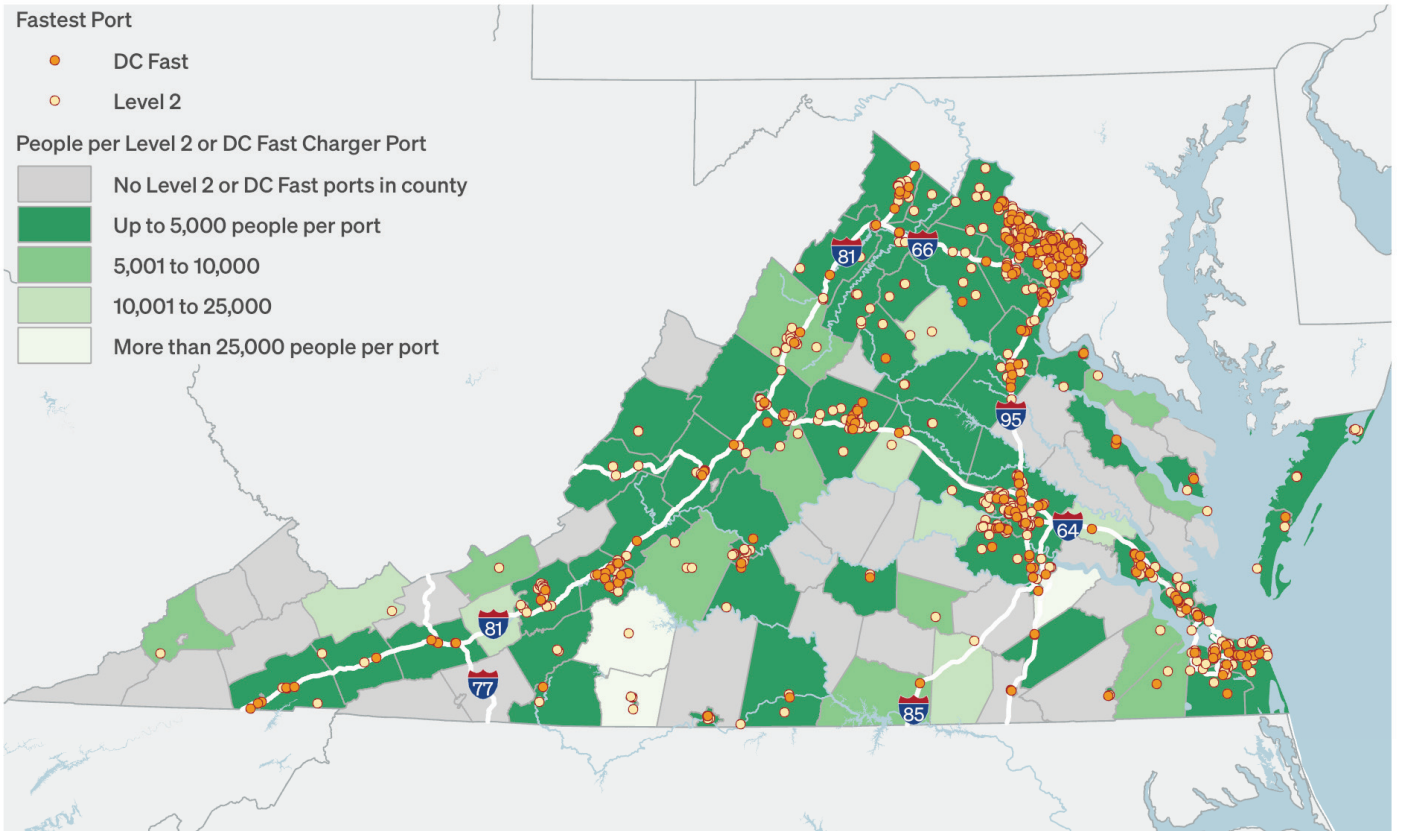
Beyond making more EVs available for purchase in the Commonwealth, the Clean Cars standards could produce almost 30,000 new jobs in Virginia¹⁴ and result in \$814.5 million in total net benefits.¹⁵ EVs also keep more money in Virginia's economy, since they are powered by Virginia's electricity grid rather than out-of-state oil companies.

Build on Virginia's commitment to EV infrastructure

EV charging stations are being rapidly deployed across the state. As of August 2024, there were more than 1,500 public charging stations statewide.¹⁶ DEQ has already allocated funding from the Volkswagen settlement to expand charging infrastructure that puts an estimated 93% of Virginians within 30 miles of a fast charger,¹⁷ and the pace of charger deployment is expected to accelerate. Virginia is receiving over \$100 million from the federal infrastructure act to continue to build out public charging infrastructure,¹⁸ and there are other federal grant opportunities and incentives for public and private charger installation.¹⁹



EV charging ports in Virginia



Sources: US Census Bureau, Commonwealth of Virginia, Alternative Fuels Data Center
Note: Many stations have multiple ports. Data is from August 2024

Become an EV leader without stressing the grid

The Clean Cars standards are projected to result in only 4% more electricity demand in Virginia in model year 2040 compared to the increase in electricity sales that would otherwise occur from EVs.²⁰ Even with this additional demand, energy sales from EVs are projected to account for less than 9% of total electricity sales 18 years from now.²¹ By comparison, the rapid rise of data centers has led to that industry consuming roughly 20% of the electricity in Virginia today²² — with growth expected to grow by at least 5% annually over the next 15 years.²³

Reduce overall electricity rates

According to a report from the State Corporation Commission, if utilities adopt smart policies such as time-of-use rates, widespread EV adoption could put downward pressure on electricity rates and lead to savings for all ratepayers, whether they drive an EV or not.²⁴



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