

8 states vow 3.3M zero-emission vehicles by 2025 (Update)

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This March 31, 2011 file photo shows an electric charging station in downtown Portland, Ore. The governors of eight states including California and New York pledged Thursday to get 3.3 million zero-emission vehicles on roadways by 2025 in an effort to curb greenhouse gas pollution. (AP Photo/Rick Bowmer)

The governors of eight states including California and New York pledged Thursday to work together to create charging stations and other fueling infrastructure needed to get 3.3 million zero-emission vehicles on those states' roadways by 2025 to curb greenhouse gas pollution.

Representatives from all eight states were gathered in Sacramento to sign a memorandum of understanding that would create a task force meant to help increase charging infrastructure, roadway signs and other changes in an effort to buoy the market for electric cars, hydrogen fuel-cell electric vehicles and plug-in hybrids. By 2015, there are expected to be more than 200,000 zero emissions vehicles on roads across the U.S.

The other states involved are Massachusetts, Maryland, Oregon, Connecticut, Rhode Island and Vermont. The eight states together represent about 23 percent of the U.S. auto market.

Auto makers applauded the agreement as an important step toward getting consumers interested in these technologies, which until now have been slow to catch on because of worries over electric car range.

"(3.3 million) is not an achievable goal given what we're doing today from an infrastructure investment standpoint. It's just not," said Dan Gage, a spokesman for the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers in Washington, D.C., which represents Toyota Motor Corp., General Motors Co. and 10 others.

"Up to this point there's been a lack of consumer interest, and a lot of that has to do with investment in infrastructure," he said.



This Aug. 18, 2011 file photo shows a Nissan Leaf charges at an electric vehicle charging station in Portland, Ore. he governors of eight states including California and New York pledged Thursday to get 3.3 million zero-emission vehicles on roadways by 2025 in an effort to curb greenhouse gas pollution. (AP Photo/Rick Bowmer,File)

Each state has already, separately adopted rules to require a percentage of new vehicles sold to be zero emission by 2025. California's mandate of 15.4 percent calls for a total of 1.5 million zero-emission vehicles to be on the state's roads by that time.

While the agreement signed Thursday requires no specific financial commitment from each state, they have all vowed to work together to smooth building codes and other regulations in a way that will allow quick rollout of new charging stations.

"The idea is to make it easier for customers to operate and use zero

emission vehicles, this in turn will help pave the way for success of the auto industry," Mary Nichols, chairman of the California Air Resources Board, said.



Mary Nichols, chairwoman of the California Air Resources Board, left, and Deb Markowitz, secretary of the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources view an electric car displayed in Sacramento, Calif., following a news conference to announce the signing of an agreement on zero emissions cars, Thursday, Oct. 24, 2013. Nichols, Markowski and the representatives of six other states signed an memorandum of understanding to work together to create charging stations and other fueling infrastructure needed to get 3.3 million zero-emission vehicles on those states roadways by 20225 to curb greenhouse gas pollution.(AP Photo/Rich Pedroncelli)

Getting 3.3 million of these vehicles will be a steep curve. In California, plug-in-hybrids and electric vehicles currently make up less than 2

percent of the auto market.

There are now 16 zero-emission vehicles from eight manufacturers on the market; nine that run on batteries alone, two hydrogen fuel cell cars and five plug-in hybrid models, which can run on battery alone or gasoline.

Officials say that every automaker will have a zero-emission model by 2015.



Mary Nichols, chairwoman of the California Air Resources Board, walks between a pair of zero emission vehicles displayed in Sacramento, Calif., following a news conference to announce the signing of an agreement on zero emissions cars, Thursday, Oct. 24, 2013. Nichols and the representatives of seven other states signed an memorandum of understanding to work together to create charging stations and other fueling infrastructure needed to get 3.3 million zero-emission vehicles on those states roadways by 20225 to curb greenhouse gas pollution.(AP Photo/Rich Pedroncelli)

Car dealers, who are under pressure to help meet these 2025 goals, say getting fueling infrastructure like charging stations in place quickly is the only way to get average consumers used to a new product that requires new driving habits.

"The cars are coming - they're here already - but if you don't have a place to charge them, there's not going to be the level of consumer acceptance."

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