

Giving up gas: China's Shenzhen switches to electric taxis

January 8 2019



In this Monday, Jan. 7, 2019, photo, new electric-powered taxis are charged at a public charging station in Shenzhen city, south China's Guangdong province. One of China's major cities has reached an environmental milestone, an almost all electric-powered taxi fleet. The high-tech hub of Shenzhen in southern China announced at the start of this year that 99 percent of the 21,689 taxis operating in the city were electric. (AP Photo/Vincent Yu)

One of China's major cities has reached an environmental milestone: an

almost entirely electric-powered taxi fleet.

The high-tech hub of Shenzhen in southern China announced at the start of this year that 99 percent of the 21,689 taxis operating in the [city](#) were electric. Last year, it still had 7,500 gasoline-powered taxis on the roads. A few can still be found, but electric ones far outnumber them.

The metropolis of 12.5 million is the second to achieve this feat in China and the largest. The northern China city of Taiyuan, with a population of 4.3 million, has had only [electric taxis](#) since 2016.

Shenzhen "has taken the lead among major Chinese cities," said Cui Dongshu, the secretary-general of the China Passenger Car Association.



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(AP Photo/Vincent Yu)

Shenzhen's bus fleet has been all-electric since 2017. It's one of 13 pilot cities promoting alternative-energy public transport to cut smog and develop the alternative energy industry, the Shenzhen Municipality Transport Committee said.

Beijing and other Chinese cities are served by legions of electric scooters, bicycles and three-wheeled delivery vehicles that help reduce emissions—and sometimes startle pedestrians with their near-silent operation.



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Shenzhen's 20,000-plus electric taxis will reduce [carbon emissions](#) by about 850,000 tons a year, the city's transport committee said. However, the all-electric initiative doesn't include Uber-like ride-hailing and ride-sharing services, which are popular in China.

Providing places to recharge taxis has been a big hurdle since Shenzhen rolled out its first 100 electric cabs in 2010. Cui praised the city for its network of about 20,000 public charging stations, which he said should be enough to meet most of the demand.

The electric taxis are equipped with an on-board terminal that tells drivers where taxis are in short supply, such as the airport, train station or other locations. It also clearly displays the fare and the [taxi's](#) route, which the Shenzhen transport committee said would help prevent drivers from overcharging or taking a roundabout route.



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Shenzhen, which borders Hong Kong, is home to Huawei Technologies and a host of other Chinese technology companies.



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