

White House announces US electric car recharging network

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The White House announced plans Thursday to create a 25,000 mile (40,000 km) recharging network for electric cars that it hopes will encourage drivers to switch from gasoline-powered vehicles.

The Department of Transportation will designate 48 official electric vehicle routes on highways that cover 35 of the 50 states, with the aim of eventually building out further as demand grows.

With the new power network, electric car drivers will be able to find a recharging station every 50 miles (80 kilometers), with regular signage indicating the locations.

The government will work with the states, private businesses, and public groups to establish the recharging stations "to enable coast-to-coast zero emission mobility on our nation's highways," the White House said in a statement.

Electric car makers Nissan, BMW, General Motors

and a number of major power companies are among the companies participating in the initiative.

The move also will better support companies, states and cities building their own fleets of electric cars, trucks and buses, the White House said.

"The Obama Administration is committed to taking responsible steps to combat climate change, increase access to clean energy technologies, and reduce our dependence on oil."

Currently there are more than 16,000 charging stations around the country, up from 500 in 2008, but still dwarfed by the number of gasoline stations, around 150,000 according to industry figures, the statement said.

Despite significant tax incentives Americans have been slow to purchase plug-in electric cars, in part because of high costs and the low range of the batteries of most models, which limits trips to short distances.

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