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Tesla Will Open Some Chargers to All Electric Vehicles

An agreement with the White House to allow electric cars made by other automakers is part of a broad effort to improve charging and increase sales of battery-powered vehicles.



The Biden administration said 7,500 Tesla chargers would be open to other vehicles by the end of 2024. Credit...Carter Johnston for The New York Times



By [Jack Ewing](#)

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Tesla will open some of its fast chargers, which had been exclusive to its customers, to all electric vehicles by the end of next year, the Biden administration said on Wednesday as it announced [a broad effort to improve charging](#) and encourage more people to buy battery-powered vehicles.

The company's network of fast chargers has been a key element in the company's success by giving drivers confidence that they will be able to charge cars during longer trips. The company's network also has a reputation for being faster and more reliable than the networks available to owners of electric vehicles made by other manufacturers. Those chargers require drivers to download special apps and often [are hard to use or out of commission](#).

Tesla accounts for more than half the fast chargers in the United States, and its network could provide a significant boost to the Biden administration's plans to encourage electric vehicle ownership and fight climate change. Financial incentives to car buyers and manufacturers, part of the [Inflation Reduction Act](#) passed by Democrats in Congress last year, are already making some electric vehicles as [cheap to buy](#) as comparable gasoline cars.

The [Biden administration](#) said 7,500 Tesla chargers will be open to other vehicles by the end of 2024. Of those, 3,500 are fast chargers capable of recharging a vehicle in about half an hour to an hour. The rest are slower chargers at hotels, restaurants and other destinations that are already available to owners of other car brands if they buy an adapter.

Tesla has about 17,700 fast chargers in the United States, [according to the Department of Energy](#), meaning that most of the network will remain closed to electric vehicles made by General Motors, Ford Motor, Volkswagen and others.

Tesla said the opening of its network would be part of a major expansion. "Our U.S. network will more than double by the end of 2024 to support our growing Tesla fleet and new E.V. customers," the company said on Twitter without providing further details.

By opening its network, Tesla can earn revenue from owners of its competitors' vehicles, but may also diminish one of its main advantages as it faces stiffer competition from established carmakers.

“It’s a double-edged sword for Tesla,” said Ben Rose, president of Battle Road Research. “It helps to grow the industry. It demonstrates that Tesla wants to be a team player. On the other hand, this reduces a competitive advantage vis-à-vis the other manufacturers who are way behind in creating their own charging networks.”

Tesla already allows other vehicles to use its chargers in a pilot program in 14 European countries, including France, Germany and Britain. The company’s network in Australia and Iceland is also open to other cars.

Tesla’s decision to open its network means the company will become eligible for some of the \$7.5 billion in grant money that Congress authorized as part of a bipartisan infrastructure law passed in 2021. The money is meant to help create a nationwide charging infrastructure. The administration announced rules for the program Wednesday, including requirements that the equipment be manufactured in the United States, and that chargers function without specialized mobile phone apps.

Chargers will be required to accept a standard form of payment, such as credit cards. Another possibility is that apps for charging networks like ChargePoint or EVgo would be programmed to work with other networks, in the same way that an A.T.M. card from one bank can be used at the machines owned by other banks. California, which has more electric vehicles on the road than any other state, already requires chargers to accept major credit cards.

The fragmented charging system in the United States is a major frustration for electric vehicle owners, who often find that they must download apps and enter personal details and payment information before they can charge. The procedures used to activate charging equipment also differ from company to company, leading to confusion.

Companies that offer charging must also ensure that the network works 97 percent of the time, the administration said in a fact sheet, and charging systems must be standardized. That is achievable, said Mike Calise, Americas president for Tritium, an Australian manufacturer of charging equipment that has a factory in Lebanon, Tenn.

“This is very good for the industry, very good for E.V. adoption,” Mr. Calise said of the administration’s plan. Tritium said Wednesday it would increase its work force in Tennessee by 50 percent, to 750 employees, to help meet increased demand.

The Biden administration’s goal is to build a network of 500,000 chargers in the United States by 2030, up from 130,000 today, and increase electric vehicles’ share of new car sales to 50 percent, compared to 6 percent last year. All 50 states are participating in a program designed to line major highways with fast chargers no more than 50 miles apart.

Manufacturers including Mercedes-Benz, G.M. and Ford plan to install charging equipment at dealerships and other locations. ChargePoint, Volvo and Starbucks will work together to install chargers at 60 Starbucks locations between Denver and Seattle. Truck stop operators Pilot Flying J and Travel Centers of America also plan to install chargers.

Most owners of electric cars charge their vehicles at home using a dedicated 220-volt connection that can typically fill up a car battery in about eight hours, but that is often not an option for people who rent homes or apartments. Charging electric cars using a standard 110-volt outlet can take up to 60 hours.

Jack Ewing writes about business from New York, focusing on the auto industry and the transition to electric cars. He spent much of his career in Europe and is the author of "Faster, Higher, Farther," about the Volkswagen emissions scandal. [@JackEwingNYT](#) · [Facebook](#)