

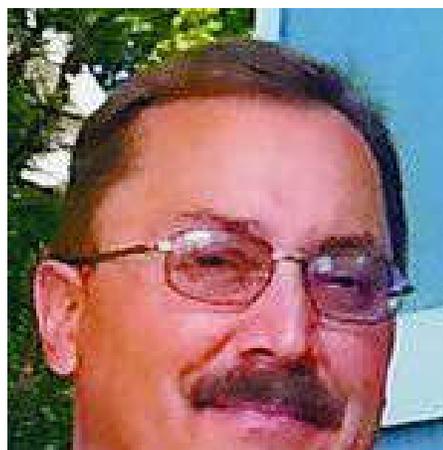
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His View: What's keeping us from buying an all-electric car?

By Al Poplawsky Jan 10, 2018 Updated Jan 10, 2018



The 2015 Chevrolet Spark EV.



It's finally time to throw away all those negative preconceptions you've had about electric vehicles or EVs.

They're too expensive

I just bought a 2015 Chevrolet Spark EV with only 6,250 miles on the odometer for \$11,000 - less than what you would pay for mos



Al Poplawsky

2015 gas cars. The list price of both Chevrolet's new Bolt EV and the Tesla Model III start at around \$35,000, and there's a \$7,500 federal tax credit available - with some states adding additional tax credits. This brings the price down to the \$25,000-\$30,000 range, comparable to what you would pay for a new gas car.

They're underpowered and slow

The Spark motor boasts 140 horsepower and 327 foot/pounds of torque - the car does 0-60 in 7.2 seconds. It's faster than any of my gas cars and probably yours, too.

They don't go far enough between charges

The Spark is rated at 82 miles of range, however, 95 percent of the car trips Americans take are under 30 miles. It's a perfect second car for around town or work commutes. It's not ideal for cross-country trips, but with the DC quick-charging option I can take longer trips if I seek out public DC quick-charging stations and take 20 minute breaks for 80 percent charges. However even better, the Bolt and Model III EVs have ranges of about 240 miles. With a few 30 minute DC quick charges during the trip, I have a 420 mile day.

They take too long to charge

Besides the DC quick charge, I fully charge my car on a standard 110 volt AC outlet at home in 11 to 12 hours - overnight. I could buy a 220 volt charger and cut the time in half, but I don't see the need for it.

The batteries wear out

The Spark meets the industry standard with an eight year/100,000 mile factory warranty on the lithium ion battery, even though several owners of this car report an increasing battery capacity as the years roll by.

They're not noisy and stinky

Well you've got me there. Really I checked, and my Spark EV has no tailpipe.

There certainly are several significant advantages to driving an EV instead of a gas car. For overall efficiency, the Spark is rated at 128 miles per gallon equivalent. Pollution-wise, according to a Union of Concerned Scientists study, here in the clean-power Pacific Northwest, the Spark and similar EVs are equivalent to 94 mpg gas cars.

Fuel costs

At the Avista rate of 9 cents per kilowatt hour, the Spark costs or 2 cents per mile to fuel. My 24 mpg gas car currently costs 12 cents per mile to fuel. That's a savings of \$100 every 1,000 miles driven.

Maintenance

Forget about oil changes, spark plugs, drive belts, timing belts, head gaskets, fuel pumps, alternators, starters, transmissions et EVs are beautifully simple and have none of these expensive headaches

Really, there is no longer any good reason to avoid today's clean quiet, high-performing and economical EVs.

So, what are you waiting for?

Al Poplawsky, a University of Idaho research specialist, is active in the Paradise Ridge Defense Coalition and the local Citizens' Climate Lobby group.

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