

THE POWER OUTLET

JUNE 2026 NEWSLETTER of the SEATTLE ELECTRIC VEHICLE ASSOCIATION

"Education, demonstration, proliferation"

Since 1980



Seattle Electric Vehicle Association

SeattleEVA.org



The Power Outlet is a monthly update about electric vehicle activities in Seattle and around the State of Washington

*The Seattle Electric Vehicle Association (SEVA) is a non-profit organization of volunteers serving the Puget Sound region in Washington State since 1980. SEVA's mission is to **educate, demonstrate and proliferate the adoption of electric vehicles**. Monthly meetings are free and open to anyone interested in electric vehicles, and paid memberships are encouraged.*

SEVA has a [Facebook](#) page, too! Please like and follow us for up-to-the-minute updates.

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New federal tax on EVs could cost \$150 per year

Recently introduced legislation in Congress could increase registration fees on all electric vehicles by up to \$150 per year. The BUILD America 250 Act would add the tax on EVs in place of the federal gas tax to support the Highway Trust Fund. The tax would start at \$130 a year and increase each year until reaching \$150. Even plug-in hybrids would be charged a new tax as well, starting at \$35 and increasing to \$50 a year. The new taxes would be on top of the state's \$225 annual fees that EV drivers already pay in Washington. The BUILD America 250 act also removes billions of dollars in funding for EV charging and clean transportation options, such as electric transit buses, port and ferry electrification, and healthy streets programs. Plug In America produced a good analysis and comparisons of the taxes that EV drivers and ICE drivers would pay under the legislation [here](#).



Issaquah gets two of the first electric garbage trucks in state

The City of Issaquah recently announced that two all-electric garbage trucks are now serving the city through their contract with Recology. Mayor Mark Mullet was a champion for EV policy when he was a state senator years ago, and he was one of the first



people in Washington to take delivery of a Tesla Roadster. The new trucks are the first side-load electric garbage trucks in Washington. They each are estimated to avoid 100 metric tons of CO2 emissions per year in comparison to a traditional compressed natural gas collection vehicle and will reduce local air pollution, reduce noise inference for local wildlife, and support the City's waste diversion goals.

FEATURE of the MONTH

Lithium battery safety that EV drivers need to know

Reports of lithium battery fires – in early Chevy Bolts and some newer Nissan Leafs – have raised concerns about the safety of the lithium battery technology. SEVA President Stephen Johnsen did some research and shared details that he learned about the composition and safety of lithium batteries.

“Overall, electric vehicles are generally less likely to catch fire than internal combustion engine vehicles,” based on a number of studies, Stephen said.

Admittedly, some cheap scooters and e-bikes have had problems with battery fires, in addition to a few cars. But the incidence of fires in production cars is very low and usually occurs as the result of an accident. The battery pack location under the vehicle gives it a low center of gravity that lowers the risk of rollover, Stephen noted.



A Nissan Leaf with likely a faulty cell caught fire at a DCFC in California. Nissan has issued a recall affecting some 40,000 Leafs of certain VIN numbers from 2019-2022 for risk of fire due to cell defects that can manifest during DCFC. Photo by Bob M.

According to a video assessment produced by the New York City and San Diego fire departments, most EV accidents do not involve fire, and of the few that do have fires, 60 percent do not involve the high-voltage lithium battery. Stephen shared some important safety tips from the video:

- In some fires, the 12-volt battery shuts off, so electrical controls for doors won't work. Owners should make sure they know how to operate the manual door release.
- Smoke coming from a lithium battery fire is more unhealthy than a gasoline fire.
- Thermal runaway is difficult to contain and put out, even when fully submerged in water.
- In case of a fire, move away from the car, and move other cars away from the car on fire. A recent Amazon fire destroyed several electric delivery vans parked together.
- A fire blanket can help contain a lithium fire, but won't put it out.
- If going away for a long time, it is generally advisable to set your maximum charge to a low state-of-charge percentage, but keep it plugged into the wall EVSE. The battery management system will take care of it.

Unlike a fire in a gasoline car, lithium batteries are not likely to suddenly explode. Battery management systems provide warnings about issues. However, pressure building up in battery fires can cause explosions. Once a lithium battery fire starts it is nearly impossible to put out as the combustion creates oxygen and lithium can burn underwater.

Lithium fires are becoming more common, but it is mostly because of the proliferation of cheap electronic devices such as small power banks, e-bikes, hoverboards and e-scooters. According to the fire officials, it is unusual for the batteries to cause fires, but they catch fire when other components overheat or burn. Stephen shared a story about an old Powerwall battery pack in a garage that overheated and went into thermal runaway and blasted out windows and melted light fixtures.



The recommended safe method for disposing of old battery cells is to immerse them in a salt brine solution until they are fully drained. More and more garbage truck fires are starting with lithium cells in electronics that are disposed of incorrectly. Lithium batteries should be recycled, and King County Hazardous Waste Disposal will take small quantities. One Green Planet in Renton also takes larger quantities of lithium batteries.

Batteries come in three different form factors – prismatic, cylindrical, and pouch cells, Stephen explained. Button and coin cells are used in smaller electronics. Batteries contain a cathode with a positive charge and an anode with a negative charge. Cathodes generally are copper, and anodes are aluminum. Ternary chemistry is comprised of three metals such as NCA - nickel cobalt aluminum. Safer chemistries are lithium iron phosphate and lithium titanate oxide; however, LFP batteries create more hydrogen gas if they burn, and that can be explosive. The higher the State of Charge (SOC) the more dangerous it could be if a fire were to occur.



NBC News did a controlled test setting off an e-bike fire. Make sure you have a high quality e-bike/e-scooter battery, ideally UL listed, and use only the approved charger for its battery.

RESOURCES: The link to the full fire department video presentation is available [here](#). A printable flyer with e-bike safety tips is available [here](#). A battery electric vehicle fire checklist is available [here](#).

CHARGING CORNER

Free tech help gets cities EV charging-ready



EV advocate Forth announced it is now offering no-cost technical assistance to cities and counties across the Pacific Northwest to help them become electric vehicle-ready. As part of this effort, Forth is working with Charging Smart, a national designation and technical assistance program funded by the U.S. Department of Energy. The program helps local governments reduce barriers to EV adoption by providing expertise on updating zoning codes, streamlining permitting processes, and ensuring equitable charging infrastructure deployment. It's a structured way for communities to fast-track their readiness and get recognized for their sustainability efforts.

Forth noted that while much of this work is routed through Charging Smart, they also have broader technical assistance available for communities with needs outside of that specific program. For more details, contact Stu Green at Forth, charging.smart@forthmobility.org or 541-864-0662.

SPOTLIGHT ON PLATES



New EV specialty license plates are on the road

Washington's new EV license plates are being delivered to the first applicants. The plates use the retro green-and-white design of 1960s-era license plates, with the legend The Evergreen State. They can be ordered with typical numbers accompanied by an EV, or with a specialty combination of up to seven letters and numbers. Proceeds from the annual tab fees go toward installing charging infrastructure around the state. Photo by Grace Reamer (that's my plate)

EVENTS

Switch EV Rally - Green River College hosted its first-ever Switch EV Student Rally in May. SEVA members exhibits several vehicles at the event. In addition to the GRC EV tech training program's own Switch vehicles, high school students from Bellingham and the San Juan Islands joined in with their Switch three-wheel EVs. Power was limited to 35 percent, and then to 25 percent, due to how much torque the motors put out. The vehicles still were very fast, and the students had a blast driving what they had spent the school year building.

Photo by Stephen Johnsen



COMING SOON

Burien Father's Day Car Show – SEVA will get space to exhibit this year at the annual Burien Father's Day Car Show on Sunday, **June 21**. The event takes place from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. during the annual Strawberry Festival on SW 152nd St. and always draws a big crowd. To register for the event, send your name, email address, phone number and vehicle make, model and year to Grace Reamer at secretary@seattleeva.org.

Electric Vehicle Symposium – EVS 39, the 39th annual Electric Vehicle Symposium, scheduled for June 21-24, 2026 in Long Beach, California, has been cancelled.

Greenwood Car Show – June 27 - save the date! SEVA once again will be exhibiting at the Greenwood Car Show, the biggest car show in the Northwest. The show is from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on the last Saturday in June on Greenwood Avenue, and SEVA will be in the same location as last year near 70th in front of Ken's Market. SEVA will be covering registration costs for members exhibiting, but donations toward the fees also are gratefully accepted. Charlie Tsai is coordinating the show for SEVA. To register, send your name, street address, email address, cell phone number, and the vehicle make and model and year to Charlie at treasurer@seattleeva.org.



Charlie Tsai with his BMW Z3 conversion at the 2024 "Gasless on Greenwood" show

Forth Roadmap 2026 – Forth Mobility in Portland will be bringing its national Roadmap conference to Seattle for the first time on Sept. 13-15. The Roadmap Conference program is now



live at <https://www.roadmapforth.org/2026/program>. This year's conference will feature engaging sessions, industry insights, and valuable networking opportunities. More than 130 speakers from across green transportation sectors will cover topics ranging from charging infrastructure and funding strategies to equitable deployment and emerging technologies. Find more information and get special discounted registration for SEVA members and friends [here](#). Volunteer opportunities now are available [here](#)! You can get a full-conference ticket for \$100 with a volunteer shift of four to five hours.

CLUB NEWS

Tesla Owners Washington is hosting a local gathering for the Tesla 50 State Independence Day Lightshow at 6:30 p.m. on June 20 at the Renton Tesla location. Find more information about events and joining TOWA [here](#).



Seattle Electric Vehicle Association meets at 7 p.m. the second Tuesday of every month at rotating locations. The next meeting is on Tuesday, **June 9, 2026** at the University Village west parking garage, Level D. Gather to share cars at 6:30 p.m. Bring a friend. Open to everyone!

Please share your club news as well as your personal journey into the world of electric driving, along with photos. SEVA would like to spotlight profiles of EV pioneers in our newsletter. Please send your stories and photos to secretary@seattleeva.org.

SUPPORT

Please support SEVA and its outreach and advocacy activities with a donation. Your financial donation will help us reach more policymakers, funders and drivers statewide to advocate electric mobility, and will support expansion of our online resources. SEVA is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, and any contribution you make is fully tax-deductible. Here are four ways you can help:

1. Make a one-time online donation through PayPal at [DONATE](#).
2. You also can make a direct contribution by check. The check should be made out to SEVA and mailed to our SEVA Treasurer at: P.O. Box 92, Renton, WA 98057-0092.
3. Register and contribute annual dues as a member of SEVA at [MEMBERSHIP](#).
4. Join us! Bring yourself, your EV and your enthusiasm for driving electric to our monthly meetings, events and car shows and share your knowledge and passion.

RESOURCES

SEVA aims to maintain a comprehensive list of the EV advocacy efforts ongoing in Washington, so we count on you to keep our lists and our website updated with the most current information. Following are the organizations and efforts we have compiled so far in Washington that have a presence online and on social media:

Websites:

- Drive Electric Washington – DriveElectricWA.org
- Seattle Electric Vehicle Association - SeattleEVA.org
- Plug-In America - PlugInAmerica.org
- Electric Auto Association - ElectricAuto.org
- Forth - ForthMobility.org
- Plugshare - Plugshare.com
- National Drive Electric Week - DriveElectricWeek.org
- Drive Electric Earth Day - DriveElectricEarthDay.org
- Plug In North Central Washington - PlugInNCW.com
- Coltura – Coltura.org
- Thurston Climate Action Team - ThurstonClimateAction.org
- Tesla Owners of Washington - TeslaOwnersWA.org

Social Media:

- [Northwest Tesla Owners](#)
- [Seattle Nissan Leaf Owners](#)
- [Seattle Tesla Model 3 Owners](#)
- [Seattle Electric Vehicle Association](#)
- [Seattle Tesla Model Y Owners](#)
- [Pierce County Electric Vehicle Information Exchange](#)
- [Spokane/Coeur d'Alene Tesla Club](#)
- [Inland NW Tesla Owners Group](#)
- [PNW Tesla](#)
- [Central Washington University EV Club](#)
- [Seattle Chevy Bolt/Bolt EUV Owners](#)
- [San Juan Islands Electric Vehicles](#)
- [Mid-Columbia Electric Vehicle Association](#)

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