

To the Special Commission regarding mandating electric vehicles (EV's) in Maine:

**First let me say that this is not a decision for an unelected body. This is a decision to be made by the citizens of the state of Maine in a state-wide referendum.**

This issue is so critical that not even the governor or legislature should make the final decision. This issue deserves to be decided by Maine voters who will have to live with the consequences of their decision. Government should then implement the will of the people.

**As a Maine resident, taxpayer and property owner, I am completely opposed to both of these proposals. I chose to live in Maine because of its lifestyle. I didn't come here to be told what technology my vehicle has to use.**

I wonder if you realize that you are being used as political bait, as someone who is expendable, disposable, and considered collateral damage by the self-serving people who placed you on the commission. A quick observation: in life as in film, all bait is either discarded or eaten.

Politicians and bureaucrats have granted themselves "plausible deniability" and "arms-length" involvement in the decision-making process because of your participation, good will and intent.

They will now say, "The Commission recommended it. I am only following their lead." In this way, they will experience minimal political consequence and let the expendable commission members suffer the guaranteed-to-be consequences. Remember, no good deed goes unpunished.

Elected officials have indemnification against acts they perform in their official capacity. I know this to be true from my time serving on a school board. I introduced the standardized and commonly used policy myself. It was one of the few unanimous votes our board ever had.

I am not sure if indemnification extends to you as a commission member. I encourage you to personally verify how limited your exposure is politically, legally, professionally and financially.

You do realize that whatever your decision, it will likely be litigated and you will become involved in a time-consuming and expensive legal process. Just ask Trump!

Your best choice is to deny the proposals for the many safety reasons cited below.

Your smart and best political choice that protects your integrity and credibility is one that recommends no action until a ballot question is decided by Maine voters. I ask that you enable our democratic process and not allow the clever use of a citizen petition process to force another lifestyle mandate upon the citizenry. Mandated EV's are not in Maine's best interest.

Here are my seven reasons why I am opposed to mandatory EV's in Maine.

**1. The existing regional grid cannot support the existing electrical load let alone the substantial increase in demand required by EVs. Without significant investment in electric power generation capacity any mandate to EV's will fail.**

Living in rural Maine as I do, I have found the existing electrical service lacking in reliability. So much so, that I have had to purchase a standby generator. Just two weeks ago, my generator must have engaged two or three times in one day. This was in the summer; not after a major snow or ice storm that often causes infrastructure damage. Outages of two or three days are common.

Power grid failure results in loss. Combined with proposals to prohibit the use of wood stoves, oil, natural gas and propane, these increasing and substantial demands on the electric power grid will collapse the infrastructure. People will die, property will be damaged, businesses will fail and people won't be able to work and schools will be closed - again.

**2. Maine is a very large state. Piscataquis County where I live is larger than the State of Connecticut! Such a large area cannot be served by battery powered vehicles. Just about everything up here is transported via diesel powered trucks. The engine torque required to haul equipment, logs and food simply cannot be accomplished with battery powered vehicles, especially given the differentiating elevation and topography. Life as we know it, will end.**

This situation further degrades in cold weather when batteries simply cannot maintain their charge. This has been a long term issue with any battery. The colder it is, the less time the charge is maintained, and the sooner the battery, in this case a vehicle, loses power and stops.

The following article was published on Saturday August 19th, 2023. The beginning of the article is below. This article highlights the reality that Ford electric pick up trucks as currently built are inadequate to replace their gas powered predecessor vehicles. Here is the link to the full article:

<https://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2023/08/watch-ford-ceo-gets-hit-reality-check-while/>

**3. The dirty little secret about EV's is that they rely on fossil fuels for their electricity.**

While EVs claim to have no tailpipe emissions, the fact, and dirty little secret, is that the electricity they consume is generated by fossil fuels, hydropower or nuclear power. A grid powered by solar and wind, is still in its infancy and is not reliable especially here in Maine.

Texas wind energy producer article on massive price increases due to low wind conditions:

<https://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2023/08/texas-power-prices-surge-6000-as-grid-operator/>

Nebraska solar farm destroyed by hailstorm:

<https://www.westernjournal.com/pictures-look-punishing-minutes-baseball-sized-hail-massive->

[nebraska-solar-farm/](#)

#### **4. Electric Vehicles are not safe and at high risk of fire and extensive property damage.**

EV fires are not easily extinguished and can start in stationary or moving vehicles at any time.

The batteries used in EV's are lithium-based. Essentially there is a lithium solution contained in each battery cell that makes up a battery. Depending on the battery capacity, there could be 2,000 individual cells in a single battery.

If one cell leaks, ruptures, or gets damaged, the risk of fire is extremely high. If the vehicle is involved in an accident, there really is no way of knowing the extent of damage to the battery.

The Felicity Ace was the first cargo ship carrying EVs that caught fire in February 2022. It was intentionally sunk to put out the fire. The cargo ship and its cargo were a total loss. How do you measure the environmental impact? The monetary loss was 500 million dollars.

<https://www.cnn.com/2022/02/17/tech/ship-fire-luxury-cars/index.html>

In July of 2023, a second ship transporting electric vehicles caught fire.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/money/other/new-images-show-destruction-inside-cargo-ship-set-alight-by-burning-evs/ar-AA1fpBAK>

I can tell you as a volunteer fire fighter who has been briefed on lithium battery fires, that our policy is to contain the fire and prevent the fire from spreading and let the vehicle burn. Towing companies don't want to transport EV's because of the risk of the fire restarting.

EV fires require an enormous amount of water to contain. And even when you think the fire is out; they are at risk of burning again without warning even days later.

For perspective: our fire truck is called a "pumper." We bring approximately 1,000 gallons of water to every fire call. This sized truck is typical for rural volunteer fire departments as they can navigate two-lane and dirt roads. The pumps can move 1,000 gallons a MINUTE! Without a steady supply of water, they empty very quickly and put the entire area at risk. It's the brush / ground fires that rural fire fighters fear the most. An EV fire on a remote road away from water presents a catastrophic situation for any fire department.

Here is an article that states up to 30,000 to 40,000 gallons of water are needed to put out an burning Tesla automobile in a parking lot. That is the equivalent of 40 truckloads of water to a remote road.

Why would anyone mandate electric vehicles knowing that this is likely to happen based on documented past experience? It makes no sense to require EV's especially in rural areas.

<https://www.ctif.org/news/150-000-liters-water-needed-put-out-fire-electric-car>

In a training session, we were shown a video of an e-bike parked in a garage that burst into flame from likely being overcharged. The entire house was engulfed in flames in just about two minutes. This was an e-bike battery, not an electric vehicle or truck which could start a fire of a much larger scale especially in a garage, shed or under an inhabited space.

Here is a video of an e-bike fire in The Bronx, New York.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yIQDhls-A44>

**5. EVs cost more to buy and insure compared to equivalent gas powered vehicles. Consumer Reports published this article in April 2023:**

<https://www.consumerreports.org/money/car-insurance/electric-vehicles-cost-more-to-insure-than-gasoline-powered-a6372607024/>

The higher insurance cost is largely due to the expense of battery replacement which causes the vehicles to be considered total losses and deemed not repairable. EV's also take longer to repair and therefore have high labor costs for repairs.

**6. EV battery disposal and recycling is not an easy task and has the likely consequence for severe environmental impact.**

Unlike lead acid batteries, the chemistry and components of EV batteries differ from manufacturer to manufacturer. This presents a complex recycling situation. It gets more complex if an EV battery is damaged and at risk of fire.

The following article in the Washington Post of June 18, 2023 discusses this issue:

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/energy/2023/06/18/ev-batteries-don-t-have-to-end-up-in-landfill/fdb37ec8-0e1d-11ee-8d22-5f65b2e2f6ad\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/energy/2023/06/18/ev-batteries-don-t-have-to-end-up-in-landfill/fdb37ec8-0e1d-11ee-8d22-5f65b2e2f6ad_story.html)

**7. Lithium is the new oil and subject to political and economic issues and the inherent instability that goes with it. Here is an article that addresses the impact in Latin America.**

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/eliasferrerbreda/2023/08/08/is-this-the-dawn-of-a-lithium-opec/?sh=72bb1ebf1262>

This article addresses the lithium mines in China and their local environmental impact. It should also be noted that mining lithium is similar to open air pit mining of coal. Huge holes in the ground are constructed and the earth is hauled away for processing. Lithium shares similar environmental issues to coal mining.

<https://www.reuters.com/markets/commodities/chinas-lithium-hub-mining-boom-comes-cost-2023-06-15/>

In closing, the decision to mandate EV's will change our way of life. It will fundamentally alter our economy, but not for the better. The risk of a car bursting into flame will be next to you in a supermarket parking lot. Not a good idea. What could go wrong? We already know the answer!

I moved here to enjoy the four-season experience in Maine. I came here to retire and live a life in a remote area, without dense population and government over-reach. The 2020 census in my town was 132 people.

I can tell you that a decision to mandate EV's will cause many to leave the state, myself included. Your decision will force me to alter my retirement plans and negate the investments I have made in my property and my community.

EV's are not ready for prime time. To mandate them is to doom the future of Maine for our children and their progeny.

Most Sincerely,

Howard Coffman  
Bowerbank, Maine