

EARTH DAY: It's Time to Make Better Transportation Decisions

Earth Day is a time when we consider how decisions we make this year, and next, will impact the future happiness and health of the people we love, and all people on the planet. One crucial part of this is how we move ourselves and goods from place to place. **Earth Day is more than a time for reflection – it is a call to action.**

Transportation is currently the biggest cause of global warming and air pollution that damages our hearts and lungs, has contributed to increased flooding, wildfires, drought, and extreme heat across the country and planet, and promises much more severe impacts unless we act now. Each and all of us have the power to make a better future by coming together to insist that our local, state, and federal governments invest our tax dollars in different ways.

There are two intertwined changes that we must demand:



1. We shift away from highway expansion and instead invest our tax dollars into healthy, sustainable, and economically prosperous choices in moving around: buses, trains, bikes, walking, and rolling



2. We rapidly transition away from gas and diesel-burning cars, buses, and trucks to electric vehicles

The **Union of Concerned Scientists** recently <u>ran some numbers</u> using a <u>digital calculator</u> created by the Rocky Mountain Institute. Their calculations show us what could be accomplished if states were to combine electrification levels brought on by the Inflation Reduction Act¹ with an ambitious reduction (20%) in vehicle travel:²

- 1. Electrification scenario based UCS' Net Zero scenarios in their <u>Accelerating Clean Energy Ambition report</u> that reach around 100% zero-emission vehicle adoption by 2050 in line with US commitments for net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.
- 2. 20% reduction in total vehicle miles traveled (VMT) from 2021 levels by 2050 is in line with scenarios of the maximum achievable VMT reductions by the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy and Grubler et al., 2018, as well as existing trajectories for goals and plans by California, Washington, Maine, Delaware, Connecticut, Colorado, and many other states when projected using RMI's Smarter MODES calculator. This is equivalent to around a 31.5% per capita reduction by 2050. VMT: is a measure of total vehicular travel that accounts for the number of vehicle trips and the length of those trips













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BETTER CLIMATE: We could reduce dangerous air pollution by **3,165 million metric tons of global warming pollution over and above what we could by focusing only on electrification**, and we could also dramatically reduce the pollution resulting from increased demand for electric vehicle charging. RMI's calculator estimates put this at 5,433 terawatt hours of energy, an amount equal to over 103 years of NYC's energy use. These numbers demonstrated why we must demand that transportation planners invest in transportation choices that reduce car travel as well as 100% vehicle electrification.



REDUCED LIVING EXPENSES: Average families could save \$3,024 a year in car expenses (fuel, repairs/maintenance, and depreciation), <u>and if new train</u>, bus, biking, and walking options gave families the freedom to forego a car, then they could save \$12,000 a year on average!



HEALTHIER FAMILIES: Smarter decisions would also rescue lives. RMI's calculator estimates that if we made these changes by 2050 that the reduced traffic accidents, combined with healthier lifestyles and cleaner air, could save over **83,000** lives each year.

Combined, these changes will make our lives better in so many ways that it raises real questions about who we are up against and why we have not already made these changes! It is not a mystery; there are groups and wealthy individuals who oppose these changes because they profit more without them. Across the country, we are up against powerful interests. In some states, it's single-minded suppliers of road construction; in others, it's big developers who want to build far away from public transportation, and of course, it is the oil and gas behemoths who want to stop electrification. We need to make our voices louder and our numbers larger to push for change.

This Earth Day, we come together to demand a better future from our elected representatives.





BENEFITS OF 20% TOTAL VMT REDUCTION ACROSS THE COUNTRY BY 2050 (31.5% REDUCTION PER CAPITA) WITH 100% EV ADOPTION BY 2050*

State	Cumulative Reduced GHG emissions through 2050 (Million Metric Tons)	Equivalent number of natural gas plants' annual emissions	Average Yearly Household Savings Through 2050	Average lives saved per year through 2050	Cumulative avoided electricity demand through 2050 (TWh)
Alabama	152	383	\$7,995	3,213	210
Alaska	8	19	\$3,859	165	11
Arizona	50	126	\$1,951	1,353	86
Arkansas	47	119	\$4,548	1,190	78
California	267	670	\$3,709	9,811	614
Colorado	20	50	\$1,111	632	45
Connecticut	24	60	\$2,426	580	41
Delaware	17	43	\$4,052	353	23
District of Columbia	1	4	\$578	42	3
Florida	209	524	\$2,192	4,801	311
Georgia	210	529	\$4,578	4,405	287
Hawaii	12	31	\$2,868	222	14
Idaho	19	48	\$2,704	507	33
Illinois	93	233	\$2,731	2,531	167
Indiana	153	385	\$5,574	3,199	211
lowa	33	82	\$3,175	901	60
Kansas	35	88	\$4,077	977	64
Kentucky	56	141	\$2,986	1,114	72
Louisiana	66	166	\$4,457	1,615	105
Maine	11	29	\$3,023	346	24
Maryland	75	188	\$4,207	1,940	134
Massachusetts	32	81	\$1,793	969	69
Michigan	106	266	\$2,600	2,084	142
Minnesota	46	116	\$2,589	1,316	89
Mississippi	19	47	\$1,817	421	27
Missouri	106	267	\$5,299	2,840	187
Montana	18	44	\$4,351	460	31

*Using RMI's Smarter MODES Calculator: https://rmi.org/insight/smarter-modes-calculator-smarter-mobility-options-for-decarbonization-equity-and-safety/ Email: kshen@ucsusa.org





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Nebraska	19	48	\$2,925	523	34
Nevada	49	124	\$4,574	1,414	92
New Hampshire	17	43	\$3,470	397	26
New Jersey	81	205	\$3,003	1,952	137
New Mexico	25	62	\$5,192	815	52
New York	146	368	\$4,284	5,979	432
North Carolina	135	340	\$4,438	4,524	296
North Dakota	8	20	\$2,653	218	14
Ohio	174	437	\$3,568	3,614	238
Oklahoma	10	26	\$833	274	18
Oregon	24	59	\$2,137	873	57
Pennsylvania	54	136	\$1,036	1,070	70
Rhode Island	1	3	\$565	43	3
South Carolina	74	186	\$3,236	1,619	106
South Dakota	7	18	\$2,218	196	13
Tennessee	154	387	\$4,734	3,047	200
Texas	227	571	\$2,600	7,221	466
Utah	40	101	\$3,411	1,049	68
Vermont	4	11	\$2,669	136	9
Virginia	49	112	\$2,193	1,553	101
Washington	25	64	\$1,426	1,087	73
West Virginia	12	29	\$1,898	237	15
Wisconsin	112	282	\$5,313	2,642	177
Wyoming	8	19	\$4,686	200	13
United States Total	3,165	7,953	\$3,024	83,804	5,433

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APPENDICES: CLICK TO LOCATE YOUR STATE'S CLIMATE IMPACT

ALL 50 STATES

ALABAMA

ALASKA

ARIZONA

ARKANSAS

CALIFORNIA

COLORADO

CONNECTICUT

WASHINGTON D.C.

DELEWARE

FLORIDA

GEORGIA

HAWAII

IDAHO

ILLINOIS

INDIANA

IOWA

KANSAS

KENTUCKY

LOUISIANA

MAINE

MARYLAND

MASSACHUSETTS

MICHIGAN

MINNESOTA

MISSISSIPPI

MISSOURI

MONTANA

NEBRASKA

NEVADA

NEW HAMPSHIRE

NEW JERSEY

NEW MEXICO

NEW YORK

NORTH CAROLINA

NORTH DAKOTA

OHIO

OKLAHOMA

OREGON

PENNSYLVANIA

RHODE ISLAND

SOUTH CAROLINA

SOUTH DAKOTA

TENNESSEE

TEXAS

UTAH

VERMONT

VIRGINIA

WASHINTON

WEST VIRGINIA

WISCONSIN

WYOMING











































































































