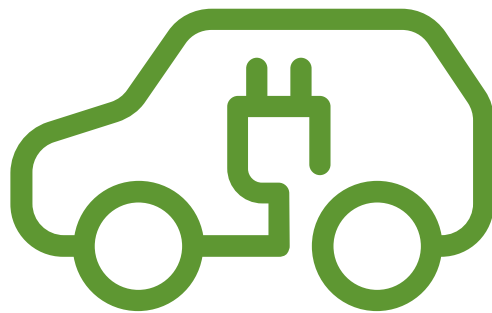


The New York League of Conservation Voters Education Fund  
and Sustainable Westchester

**ACHIEVING OUR GOALS**

# **ELECTRIC VEHICLES**



**POLICY FORUM  
RECOMMENDATIONS**



**JUNE 2018**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Since 2015, NYLCVEF has been working with partners and key stakeholders in Westchester to increase the use of electric vehicles (EVs) and the availability of EV charging infrastructure. With generous support from the Westchester Community Foundation, NYLCVEF established the EV Working Group, which includes more than 30 state and local experts, leaders, and advocates committed in their efforts to advance public policy in support of EVs. We held an EV Working Group Roundtable to establish shared goals, collaborated with local legislators to try to increase access to public charging, developed an EV Pledge for municipalities, and most recently, co-hosted an EV Policy Forum with our partners at Sustainable Westchester.



photo: © New York League of Conservation Voters

Even with these successes, much work remains to advance EV use, transition dirty fleets, and increase charging infrastructure. Our EV Policy Forum brought together key stakeholders from the EV industry, utility companies, and state and county government to assess our progress, identify major challenges, and put forward practical recommendations for how to achieve our goals. The recommendations presented here are the result of that work and those conversations. The main themes of these recommendations include **1) improving coordination among stakeholders and decision-makers and 2) reducing barriers to individual adoption.**

## BACKGROUND

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The New York League of Conservation Voters Education Fund (NYLCVEF) educates, engages, and empowers New Yorkers to effectively advocate for the environment. Through educational publications and policy forums, civic engagement campaigns, and nonpartisan electoral work, NYLCVEF encourages New Yorkers to participate in the environmental decision-making process and get involved in local sustainability issues, including climate change, public health, and natural resource protection.

The transportation sector contributes 34% of New York’s greenhouse gas emissions, and according to New York State’s Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC), this number is growing. To mitigate the impact of the transportation sector on climate change, NYS DEC has been working to encourage the transition to cleaner fuels, improve and expand public transportation, and increase electric and zero-emissions infrastructure.

Since 2015, NYLCVEF has been focused on leveraging these state policy commitments to increase the use and the availability of electric vehicle infrastructure in Westchester County. NYLCVEF has focused on working with members of the EV Working Group to develop and achieve EV policy goals at the local level. Key topics of this agenda include supporting an “EV Ready” policy that plans ahead for charging infrastructure in public spaces and engaging municipal leaders on the benefits of transitioning their fleets.

On April 27, 2018, NYLCVEF partnered with Sustainable Westchester to bring together EV experts, representatives from the EV industry, and state and county legislators for an EV Policy Forum on the current status and future of EVs in Westchester County. More than 60 municipal officials, advocates, and community members joined in on the conversation at the Westchester County Center in White Plains. Joan McDonald, Westchester County’s Director of Operations, announced the county’s renewed commitment to sustainability, including adding at least 30 EVs to the municipal fleet next fiscal year and 20 EV charging stations for public use. Visit our website for the full [EV Policy Forum program](#).

## BACKGROUND (cont'd)

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NYLCVEF and Sustainable Westchester are grateful to the expert speakers and panelists for their participation in our event:

- Joan McDonald, *Westchester County Director of Operations*
- Tom Roach, *Mayor of White Plains*
- Nancy Barr, *Westchester County Board of Legislators*
- John Manzi, *BYD*
- Kevin G. Miller, *Chargepoint*
- Paul G. Minahan, Jr., *Nissan*
- Amy Paulin, *NYS Assembly District 88*
- Karl R. Rábago, *Pace Energy and Climate Center at Pace School of Law*
- John Shipman, *ConEdison*
- John Williams, *New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA)*

The panelists tackled the following topics: 1) the current state of EV use and best practices for EV programs around the country and at the local level; 2) the major challenges to increasing EVs in the state and county including reducing stress on the grid during peak hours; and 3) key strategies for addressing these challenges and achieving our goals.

In collaboration with Sustainable Westchester, NYLCVEF has identified three core goals for our electric vehicle campaign in Westchester County.

- Transitioning municipal fleets.
- Coordinating a plan for infrastructure.
- Getting an EV in every garage  
(encouraging two-vehicle families to switch one to electric).

The recommendations presented below seek to guide the next phase of this work and help us achieve our goals.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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### **Coordinate efforts among stakeholders and decision-makers.**

- *Expand EV incentive programs:* New York State's Drive Clean rebates, Climate Smart and Clean Energy Communities programs, & ZEV grants.
- *Aggregate municipal fleet purchases* to reduce cost and increase impact. Encourage municipalities to sign the EV Pledge.
- *Transition the dirtiest of fleets (i.e. school buses)* using the Volkswagen Settlement and other financing opportunities.
- *Install fast charging stations in strategic public locations* (i.e. the major north-south and east-west corridors: Routes 95, 87, 287, 684, 84; and the Taconic, Sprain, Hutchinson, Saw Mill, Bronx River parkways).

### **Reduce barriers to individual adoption.**

- *Increase EV education* on myths and misconceptions about range, cost, and options. Focus on getting *single family detached homes with 2 cars* to switch *1 to electric*.
- *Amplify messages* from trusted leaders about purchasing and owning an EV, including the importance of off-peak charging. Include storytelling into campaign strategy.
- *Embrace smart charging technology* options as they evolve.
- *Expand renewable energy development.*

To make these recommendations concrete and actionable, NYLCVEF and Sustainable Westchester will build on our original EV Pledge to municipalities by expanding it to Westchester residents and encouraging them to get involved and take action. These opportunities include pledges 1) To evaluate an EV as part of my family's commitment to Drive Clean, Save Green, and 2) To ask my municipal leaders to replace the municipal fleet with zero emissions or electric cars, buses, and trucks. We will provide contact information for all municipalities in the county and sample language for action takers to use. NYLCVEF and Sustainable Westchester will launch this pledge campaign in August 2018 to our members and through a targeted social media campaign. We hope to collect at least 100 action takers on each pledge before the end of the year. Help us reach and exceed our goal by taking and sharing the pledges [here](#).

## CONCLUSION

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To follow through with New York State’s ambitious carbon reduction goals, move to a more sustainable transportation system, and protect public health from air pollution, NYLCVEF remains committed to increasing the use of zero emissions and electric vehicles. We will continue the conversation in Westchester County by working with partners to engage municipalities and the general public on our priorities, including collecting pledges from Westchester County residents on personal adoption and municipal fleet replacement. We are also currently working on a campaign to electrify **New York’s school bus fleets.**



The New York League of Conservation Voters Education Fund (NYLCVEF) educates, engages, and empowers New Yorkers to be effective advocates for the environment. Through policy forums, civic engagement campaigns, and nonpartisan electoral work, NYLCVEF encourages New Yorkers to participate in the environmental decision-making process and get involved in local sustainability issues, including climate change, public health, and natural resource protection. Learn more at [www.nylcvef.org](http://www.nylcvef.org).



Sustainable Westchester ([www.sustainablewestchester.org](http://www.sustainablewestchester.org)) is a collaboration of Westchester County local governments that empower sustainability initiatives and share tools, resources, and incentives for healthy, vibrant and attractive communities, now and in the future. Focus areas include energy with programs including The Westchester Power program (CCA) serving 21 municipalities, Solarize Westchester in collaboration with Abundant Efficiency, and the Community Solar program; transportation and land use with the Clean Transportation program (EVs and charging stations), waste management and materials, food and water.

NYLCVEF is grateful to the Westchester Community Foundation, which provided grant support for our electric vehicle public policy work in Westchester County.



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