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He added, "Does it insult their manhood that they pollute more and therefore they want to attack vehicles that pollute less? I don't understand their motivation."

Pickup drivers block Tesla chargers in widening trend

By: Maxine Joselow

A parking sign at a newly installed Tesla Supercharger station in Carlsbad, Calif. Mike Blake/Reuters/Newscom

Forget "rolling coal." A new trend called "ICE-ing," in which pickup truck owners purposefully block electric vehicle charging stations, appears to be gaining ground around the country.

The practice, whose name is derived from "internal combustion engine," was observed over the holidays at a Sheetz gas station in Hickory, N.C.

Reddit user Leicina shared a photo on Dec. 23, 2018, of three large pickups blocking access to Tesla Inc. charging stations. The drivers apparently chanted "fuck Tesla."

"I've never had a supercharging experience like this one," wrote Leicina, who owns a Tesla Model 3. "These trucks blocked all the chargers, chanted 'F' Tesla, and were kicked out by a Sheetz employee."

She added, "Who do you report activity like this to? It was really uncomfortable."

It joins the similar practice of "rolling coal," in which people modify diesel engines to spew black clouds of soot. It's used as a way of protesting environmental regulations.

The political affiliations of the pickup truck drivers are unknown. But Hickory is located in Caldwell County, where 74.1 percent of residents backed President Trump in the 2016 election.

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ICE-ing has recently been observed in other parts of the country, as well.

In Bristol, Tenn., Reddit user freckletan shared a photo on Dec. 23, 2018, of a white pickup blocking Tesla chargers, saying, "Driving through Tennessee and see these 'cool guys' icing a supercharger."

The user added, "These guys parked in a Tesla charging spot with their gas (or diesel) truck, unhooked the charge cable, and laid it into their truck bed for 'comedic' effect. ... It would be the equivalent of a Tesla parking at a fuel pump at a gas station and walking away."

The trend has also been documented in Texas, South Carolina and Delaware.

The practice appears to primarily target Tesla rather than other automakers. Tesla's Model 3 has become a top-selling EV despite a year of self-inflicted drama by CEO Elon Musk (Energywire, Dec. 21, 2018).

Nine states and several cities have enacted laws prohibiting gasoline- and diesel-powered vehicles from parking in front of EV charging stations, including Arizona, California, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Massachusetts, Oregon, Rhode Island and Washington.

Rolling coal remains illegal throughout the country. Sen. Richard Burr (R-N.C.) last year introduced the "Recognizing the Protection of Motorsports Act," S. 203, in an effort to decriminalize the practice. A co-sponsor was Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.), one of Congress' most vocal climate skeptics.

Rep. Patrick McHenry (R-N.C.) introduced a companion bill in the House. But the measure ultimately failed to gain traction.

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