



INDEPENDENT

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Many EVs are currently too expensive because automakers aren't making “significant numbers,” said Mr Becker, director of the group's Safe Climate Transport Campaign. If produced en masse the prices would go down, he noted.

Mr Becker also hopes that as an EV owner, Senator Stabenow will help advance “the cause of clean vehicles” and tell auto companies based in Michigan that they need to “actually produce the vehicles instead of just producing promises.”

Senator hits back after being accused of boasting about electric car amid record gas prices

Environmental groups echoed the Michigan senator's support for electric vehicles

Ethan Freedman

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Democratic Senator Debbie Stabenow's office has defended her remarks on how driving an electric vehicle (EV) had made [gas prices](#) irrelevant – and sparked much hysteria among conservative commentators.

The Michigan senator spoke on Tuesday about how driving from her home state to Washington DC in her EV meant that she hadn't needed to consider the current high price of gas.

She made the comments during a Senate Finance Committee hearing with Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen that touched on inflation concerns. Senator Stabenow remarked that she “went by every single gas station and it didn't matter” how high the gas price was.

“I'm looking forward to the opportunity for us to move to vehicles that aren't going to be dependent on the whims of the oil companies and the international markets,” the senator added.

The remarks were met by conservative backlash, with some on the right suggesting that Senator Stabenow was out of touch.

Kyle Smith, a critic for *National Review*, [tweeted](#): “Let them buy Teslas!” in response to the video.

Pennsylvania Republican Rep. Mike Kelly [tweeted](#) that Senator Stabenow “says she drove her electric vehicle past every gas station and it didn’t matter to her how high the price was”.

He cited the median income in his district at \$54,627 and claimed the average price of an electric car is \$60,000. “Democrats don’t understand the problems of everyday Americans,” he added.

RNC Research, a division of the Republic National Committee, [tweeted](#) much the same, with the claim that the average EV costs more than \$56,000.

Kelley Blue Book, the automobile information company, reported that the average cost of an EV in November was \$56,437 via a [press release](#). Tesla’s cars [are listed](#) as costing between \$46,990 to \$138,990, depending on the model.

Senator Stabenow’s office responded to the furore on Wednesday in a statement to *The Independent* that chastised critics – and clarified that the congresswoman drives a Chevy Bolt EUV. It is [listed](#) with a starting price of \$33,500.

“Instead of helping the oil companies line their pockets with Michigan drivers’ hard earned money, these critics should join the Senator’s fight to end price gouging at the pump,” Stabenow spokesperson, Robyn Bryan, said in the statement.

“These critics also owe the autoworkers in Lake Orion, and all across Michigan, an apology for disrespecting the products they work hard to make every single day,” she added.

Some environmental groups echoed that EVs were a way to address high gas prices.

“It’s long past time that [Congress](#) invested in [electric vehicles](#) and made sure these pollution-free cars are accessible to all Americans, which would help ease fuel costs for families in the long term and tackle climate change,” [Katherine García](#) from the non-profit Sierra Club said in a statement to *The Independent*.

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Tesla sells the majority of electric cars in the US but other carmakers are racing to increase their offerings. Last year, General Motors [set a goal](#) to “eliminate tailpipe emissions from new light-duty vehicles by 2035”, and Ford [is](#) investing \$22 billion in EVs in the next three years.

EVs made up 4.5 per cent of the US car market in 2021, according to [an International Energy Agency report](#), compared to 17 per cent of the European market. China is aiming for 20 per cent EVs in 2025, the report added.

[Brett Fleishman](#), from environmental non-profit 350.org, didn’t mention EVs specifically, but noted that “everyone should have the option to travel as they please, without worrying about the whims of profiteering oil company executives and volatile international markets,” in a statement to *The Independent*.

Gas prices have recently increased in part due to the chaos surrounding the war in Ukraine. But some Democrats have also argued that the major oil companies are to blame for current high gas prices.

“When an oil company is deciding, hour by hour, how much to charge you for a gallon of gas, they’re not calling the administration to ask what they should do,” Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg [said on ABC New’s This Week](#) on Sunday. “They’re doing it based on their goal of maximizing their profits.”

Last year, the Biden administration [set a goal](#) of getting EVs to 50 percent of US car sales by 2030 in an effort to “save consumers money, cut pollution, boost public health, advance environmental justice, and tackle the [climate crisis](#).”