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“This is auto mechanics, not rocket science. Automakers can build and sell affordable EVs in other countries, but they’re just not building them for us,” he added.

“I’ve always said the biggest single step to saving money at the pump, and cutting our oil addiction, and protecting us from global warming is making cars go further — or not at all — on a gallon of gas. I don’t think there’s a change there,” Becker said in a phone interview.

“What has changed is the time,” he added. “Our sense was that people who are paying through the nose at the gas pump may be willing to stop for a minute and say, ‘Oh yeah, there aren’t tax credits anymore. But this is what we really need.’”

Environmental group bashes automakers for EV pullback in new ads

By Grant Schwab
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Washington — A prominent environmental group is launching an ad campaign faulting Michigan automakers for consumer struggles with high gas prices.

“We need to put the blame for this unaffordable economy where it belongs. Automakers have the technology that could help America break the cycle of

oil price shocks,” said Dan Becker, director of the Center for Biological Diversity’s Safe Climate Transport Campaign.

“This is auto mechanics, not rocket science. Automakers can build and sell affordable EVs in other countries, but they’re just not building them for us,” he added.

Becker's group is spending \$100,000 to place ads in major publications like the Financial Times, the Wall Street Journal and Bloomberg with the aim of reaching business-minded readers and capitalizing on frustrations with energy price hikes caused by the United States and Israel's war with Iran.

"Laws required electric vehicles. Car companies promised to make them," one of the ads says in all capital letters. "Then they lobbied to scrap the laws."

"So we pay more because they kept us hooked on oil," it adds, showing logos for Ford Motor Co., General Motors Co. and Toyota Motor Corp. "We need affordable electric vehicles. For energy security, for healthier communities, for a better future."

The ads reference the ongoing war in Iran but do not directly mention President Donald Trump, who led the United States into the conflict and has championed efforts to gut past environmental policies.

Political messaging around electric vehicles was common in the run-up to the 2024 presidential election, when Republicans frequently bashed Democrats over so-called "EV mandates." Then-candidate Trump often wielded the term on the campaign trail as Democratic opponents struggled to grapple with rocky EV adoption.

The Biden administration never explicitly required automakers to sell more vehicles with all-electric powertrains, but it did set aggressive tailpipe emissions targets that would have been impossible to achieve without EVs and in 2022 significantly expanded federal EV tax credits.

The topic has since faded from the airwaves after Trump took office.

Amid changing political tides under the GOP leader, four of Michigan's Democratic lawmakers joined Republicans last year in backing a measure to roll back influential California rules that would have required EV sales in some states.

Becker, asked why his group was sponsoring an EV ad campaign in the current political environment, said times have changed since 2024.

"I've always said the biggest single step to saving money at the pump, and cutting our oil addiction, and protecting us from global warming is making cars go further — or not at all — on a gallon of gas. I don't think there's a change there," Becker said in a phone interview.

"What has changed is the time," he added. "Our sense was that people who are paying through the nose at the gas pump may be willing to stop for a minute and say, 'Oh yeah, there aren't tax credits anymore. But this is what we really need.'"

Toyota and GM declined to comment on the ads. GM is the second-leading EV seller in the United States behind Tesla Inc. Toyota, meanwhile, has significantly expanded its all-electric lineup in the past year.

Ford did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Other groups on both sides of the EV debate previously ran ads on the topic in 2024 but have not done so yet ahead of the 2026 midterm elections.

EDF Action, the advocacy partner of the Environmental Defense Fund, ran ads in Michigan that year promoting EVs but has no plans for a national advertising campaign this year.

“We’re unlikely to see more ads, given the Trump administration rollbacks of federal support for EVs, which have pushed the issue back to the states, such as the

recent developments in California,” Jack Pratt, associate vice president at EDF Action, said in a statement.

He was referencing California's recent efforts to launch its own EV tax credit program now that the federal credit ended.

The oil and gas group American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers ran ads opposing Biden-era EV policies in 2024 but did not immediately respond to a request for comment on 2026 midterm messaging plans.

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