

# Ohio opens nation's first electric vehicle charging station funded by 2021 federal infrastructure law

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COLUMBUS, Ohio — Ohio has opened the first electric vehicle charging station in the country [to be built and funded through the \\$1.2 trillion infrastructure bill](#) President Joe Biden signed more than two years ago.

The charging station is at a Pilot Travel Center at Interstate 70 and U.S. 42 in Madison County, about 25 minutes west of Columbus. The charging station, built by EVgo, has enough power to charge four vehicles simultaneously up to 80% within 20 to 40 minutes, depending on the vehicle's battery, according to a news release from Gov. Mike DeWine's office.

The station will use combined charging system plugs, which are compatible with all vehicle models except for Tesla, although adapters are commercially available. Breanna Badanes, a spokesperson for DriveOhio, the state agency overseeing the charging station program, said the station has been used for a total of four hours since it went online on Friday.

The charging station [is one of 27 that are planned across the state](#), located at gas stations, stores, and restaurants along Interstates 70, 71, 76, 77 and 90. Construction is expected to begin soon on many of those stations, and all are expected to be online before the end of next year. Although the government is paying to build the stations, they are privately run and using them is not free.

The stations are being funded by \$18 million of the \$140 million Ohio got from the \$7.5 billion National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure program, a component of the bipartisan infrastructure bill. Businesses that are getting the charging stations are contributing another \$6 million, including Pilot Travel Centers, TH Midwest, Francis Energy, Meijer Stores, EVgo Services, ChargeNet Stations, and Equilon/Shell.

While the first round is focused on major interstate highways, future funding rounds will focus on major U.S. and state routes.

The Biden administration has focused on promoting electric vehicles to modernize the economy and to reduce fuel emissions. But the emphasis has drawn criticism from Republicans, including U.S. Sen. JD Vance of Cincinnati, who generally [have questioned government intervention in the industry](#) given the cost, the effects on auto jobs and the limited driving range of current vehicles. A recent story from Politico, published last week, [highlighted how zero charging stations had come online](#) despite the billions set aside to build them at the end of 2021.

But Republican officials in Ohio, including DeWine, have made electric vehicles a key part of their economic development strategy, and have been working on building a charging network for years. Ford, Honda and General Motors recently have announced plans to spend more than \$6 billion building or upgrading plans in Ohio to build electric vehicles or vehicle batteries.

As of last year, Ohio had 91,600 auto jobs, the second-most in the country, but down from 144,000 in August 1990.

Badanes said setting up the charging stations has been a challenge for state governments because they have no previous relevant experience. But in Ohio, the initiative is housed within DriveOhio, a component of the Ohio Department of Transportation that started under former Gov. John Kasich that's dedicated to promoting next generation driving initiatives. Ohio also had existing laws in place that allowed the state to split the costs of the project with the private companies that will run them.

Badanes said DriveOhio also has tried to rush to get ahead of other states so it doesn't have to compete for parts and labor.

"With every state moving to build these, we wanted to make sure Ohio was out in the front of the line," Badanes said.