



The West Coast Electric Highway

What is the West Coast Electric Highway?

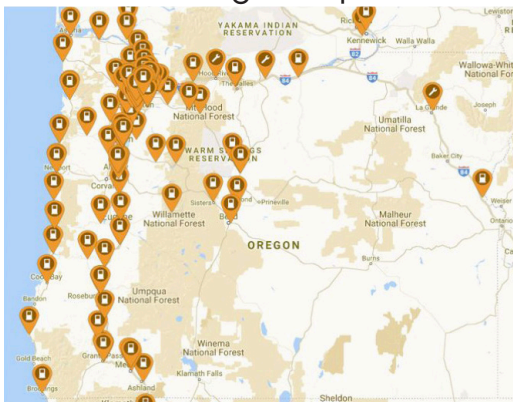
ODOT's West Coast Electric Highway (WCEH) is a network of 44 publicly available, high-speed electric vehicle "fast chargers" stationed every 25-to-50 miles along I-5, Highway 101 on the Oregon Coast, on I-84 from Portland to the Dalles and on major routes connecting the Willamette Valley to Central Oregon. The West Coast Electric Highway was installed using a combination of federal funds including the ARRA stimulus and TIGER grant programs. The charging stations are owned and operated by Webasto (formerly AeroVironment), as the project was structured as a public-private partnership.

Why is it important?

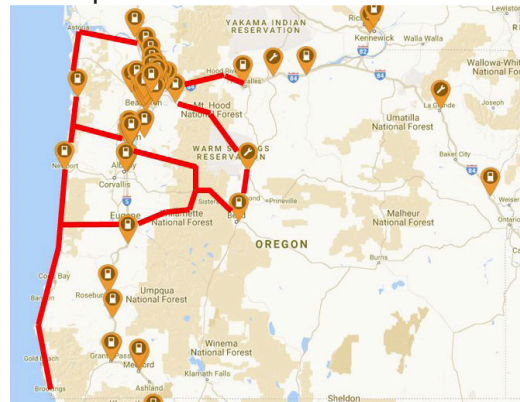
This network of fast chargers, which can provide about 50-75 miles of driving range in 20-30 minutes, have made it possible for electric vehicle owners to travel the length of our state in electric vehicles and have filled in gaps in charging infrastructure that private investment would not. Along I-5 and the Oregon coast, the West Coast Electric highway provides fully electrified transportation corridors that are essential for travel between communities and long-distance road trips. The WCEH remains the only high-speed charging option in many parts of Oregon, including most of the Oregon Coast and on routes connecting the Willamette Valley to Central Oregon. The WCEH is especially important for electric vehicle owners who live in rural areas.

What is the problem?

The West Coast Electric Highway is at risk of going "dark" without additional funding now that the state's contract with Webasto has expired, stranding thousands of Oregon's electric vehicle owners and causing Oregon's charging infrastructure to take a significant step backwards. The WCEH is not a permanent network of charging infrastructure that can simply be "turned off" and then turned back on in a year or two when more funding is available. An operating contract provision would actually require Webasto, the operator of the WCEH, to remove all existing charging stations and wiring if they cease operation of the network, creating the potential for Oregon to permanently lose this valuable transportation investment.



Current Map of Public EV Chargers



Map of EV Chargers without WCEH

What Can the Legislature Do?

ODOT is actively seeking opportunities to extend the state's contract with Webasto to sustain operation of the WCEH through 2026, and to upgrade the WCEH network to support the newest charging standards so it is compatible with newer American and European electric vehicles like the Chevy Bolt. A one-time allocation of \$3.92 million in state funds, combined with a 10% match offered by Webasto, will save this critical piece of electric vehicle infrastructure and preserve these publicly available charging stations for the next eight years.