

**6D Lin Kai Chun, Charlie**

**A Letter to the Editor**

Dear Editor,

I am writing to express my concern on the unpopularity of electric cars in Hong Kong. While more and more research shows that electric cars emit less air pollutants and greenhouse gases, which shows that they are more environmentally friendly than petrol cars, it is disappointing to see that merely 3% of all vehicles sold in 2020 worldwide were electric. The sales in Hong Kong were particularly low. We should probe into why the business of electric cars is so unpromising in our city and urge the authorities to boost its prevalence.

First and foremost, the inconvenience of electric cars greatly deters the public from buying them. It is crystal clear that the reason why someone would purchase a car is convenience. The same rule applies to enterprises which buy vehicles for operation of their businesses, such as conveyance of goods. However, to a large extent, electric cars are not as convenient as we think. One great hindrance we must tackle is the shortage of charging stations. By now, there are only around 1200 charging spots available in Hong Kong. Therefore, there is no surprise to see only 20% of car owners agree that they are sufficient. Charging stations aside, charging time is another concern. Let's say you successfully find a vacant charging station, you still cannot escape from the wait for your vehicle to be fully charged, which can take up to an hour. Compared to the two minutes required to fill the tank of a petrol car, time spent on charging electric cars undoubtedly leaves their owners frustrated.

In order to draw more customers to electric vehicles, a simple but robust solution will be to tackle the problem at its root: to enhance its convenience. If Hong Kong lacks charging stations, why doesn't the government grant developers and car parks subsidies to install more charging equipment? Not only can this promote electric car usage, but car parks can also boost their revenues, resulting in a win-win situation.

Furthermore, the government should fund universities to conduct research on how to shorten the charging speed of electric cars. Imagine if your car has a flat battery on the way to an urgent meeting, and you can get it fixed by spending only 10 minutes on charging at a roadside car park. If such a technological breakthrough were in place, I am sure that the popularisation of electric cars would be foreseeable.

Aside from inconvenience, there is still one issue we need to grapple with—the high selling price of electric cars. Price is always a principal factor when it comes to consumption patterns. While an affordable first-hand petrol car only costs HK\$100,000 to 200,000, the cheapest Tesla model is sold at a staggering price of HK\$900,000. Given that the average household income in Hong Kong amounts to only HK\$300,000, there is no denying that the general public would rather choose petrol cars instead of environmentally friendly but high-end electric cars. Moreover, the electric vehicle market being dominated by a few brands has also limited consumers' choice, forcing the affluent few to accept the extravagant price tag.

In response to the high prices of electric cars, the authorities should adopt measures which give consumers more economic incentives to take the plunge. To commence with, she should exempt the first registration fee for electric cars. Also, she may consider offering a discounted licence fee to electric car owners as a reward for their contribution to environmental protection. Furthermore, tax allowance should be granted to companies which replace their petrol cars with electric ones. By adopting these measures, a pro-electric car ambience can be established in the society, propelling more and more drivers towards the new vehicle type.

All in all, the promotion of electric cars requires joint efforts from the government, enterprises as well as the general public. It is high time that every stakeholder took action and shouldered their responsibilities to protect our Mother Earth through driving electric cars. I believe in the foreseeable future, where an electric car society would be established, if the measures are taken.

Yours faithfully,

Chris Wong