



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEWS RELEASE

City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

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Seattle: Get Ready to Drive Electric

Federal grant will fund charging stations throughout the city

SEATTLE – Mayor Greg Nickels today thanked President Obama and the U.S. Department of Energy for funding the largest electrification project in the history of transportation. Under a \$99.8 million grant announced today, Electric Transportation Engineering Corporation (eTec) will establish up to 2,550 charging systems for electric vehicles in the Seattle area, as well as four other metropolitan areas across the country. The charging station network will enable drivers to use electric vehicles throughout the region with the security of knowing a charging station is nearby.

“This news heralds the end of the filling station and the beginning of the era of the charging station,” said Nickels. “We are going to be leaders in converting our transportation from oil to electricity. We started with the Seattle streetcar and made giant strides last month with the opening of light rail. And now we’ll make it simple to drive a car powered by clean City Light electricity.”

Nickels thanked federal and regional partners, including U.S. Sens. Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell, U.S. Reps. Jim McDermott and Jay Inslee, Washington Gov. Chris Gregoire and King County Executive Kurt Triplet. These and other leaders helped usher this plan through Congress and implement it locally.

Setting the stage for today’s announcement, Nickels and Nissan North America signed an agreement last April to make Seattle one of the first markets to introduce Nissan’s LEAF – a zero-emission, all-electric car. In return, Seattle pledged to take regulatory and other steps to get ready for the arrival of Nissan’s electric car in October 2010. According to Nissan, the LEAF will go 100 miles on a single charge and be priced in the range of a typical family sedan.

The grant, announced today, will offer purchasers of the Nissan vehicle who participate in the program a 220-volt charging station in their home at no cost. In addition, eTec will establish a charging network throughout the Seattle-area that can be used by any electric vehicle equipped with industry standard connectors. eTec and project partners will study electric vehicle and charging infrastructure usage to help streamline future charge station deployment across the country.

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At current residential electricity rates, the Nissan LEAF would cost approximately \$190 to drive 10,000 miles, or just under 2 cents a mile. To drive the same distance in a car that gets 25 miles per gallon – the 2008 national MPG average – would cost approximately \$1,100 at \$2.76 per gallon, the current average cost of gasoline in Seattle.

The demonstration grant will not just benefit car owners with garages. A unique aspect of the program will offer the general public the ability to test drive and use advanced technology vehicles. Zipcar, the world's largest car sharing service, is a partner in the eTec program. Zipcar and the city of Seattle expect to collaborate on placing electric vehicles in the Zipcar Seattle fleet to be available by the hour to city employees and the general public.

Nickels has made cleaner transportation a priority since his first years in office, beginning with the city's own fleet of hybrid electric cars and trucks. In 2008, the city of Seattle began a pilot project to test plug-in hybrid electric cars.

For more information, go to www.seattlecan.org

To track the city of Seattle's progress as it seeks federal stimulus funds, visit recovery.seattle.gov This site provides information about the projects for which Seattle is seeking funding, and, if funding is granted, how the money is being spent. Seattle is seeking stimulus funding for projects in the following categories: community development, economic development, energy, environment, public safety, social services and transportation.

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