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In Plano, Texas, Tony Federico bought his Tesla Model 3 in 2018. A former Marine who votes Republican, Federico said he was drawn by the cool technology and the chance to save money on gas. Environmental concerns were “not really” on his radar.

Electric vehicles are often associated with liberal coastal types who speak of saving the planet. But in this Republican stronghold north of Dallas, more and more people are deciding that driving an electric vehicle is just common sense.

Some electric vehicle buyers expressed concern about the climate, but most said they were drawn by the performance, style and high-tech features of the vehicles — and the convenience and savings of avoiding the gas pump.

For the Biden administration, it doesn't really matter why drivers choose electric vehicles, so long as they choose them. Rapidly scaling up electric vehicle adoption is a centerpiece of the administration's green-energy agenda, which is using tax credits and other incentives to try to make plug-in vehicles account for half of new vehicle sales by 2030. Hitting that target would mean reducing U.S. greenhouse gas and air pollution emissions by up to 9 percent by 2030, according to Mark Z. Jacobson, a professor of civil and environmental engineering at Stanford University.

Conservative support for green energy isn't a totally new phenomenon. T. Boone Pickens, an oil billionaire and longtime Republican donor who embraced renewable energy late in life is often quoted saying, ‘Yeah, let's do solar, let's do wind, because if we do, then the oil will last longer.’

Even some Republican lawmakers who have long supported the oil-and-gas industry have begun sponsoring a few bills that favor electric vehicles, partly because their wealthy constituents are buying the cars. “They are seeing electric vehicles all over the Republican communities,”. “And they are seeing them with people who are seen as political and intellectual leaders in their communities.”

In Denton County, Bill Schofield, a two-time Trump voter who describes himself as fiscally conservative and socially liberal, got interested in electric vehicles a decade ago, when he was among the first 2,000 customers to buy a Tesla Model S. “The Democrats think they're saving the planet, because they think they did the real math to see that electric vehicles made sense environmentally etc” he said. “The Republicans and conservatives, they bought it because it was the cool new technology.”

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