# Hybrid cars offer minimal fuel savings compared to electric vehicles, says ECIU analysis



A recent analysis by the Energy and Climate Intelligence Unit (ECIU) has revealed that motorists who drive hybrid cars save only a marginal amount on fuel costs—approximately £13 annually compared to petrol equivalents. In contrast, switching to an electric vehicle (EV) could result in savings of up to £850 per year.

The ECIU, a thinktank dedicated to energy and climate issues, highlighted this significant discrepancy in savings, raising concerns about government policies that continue to support hybrid cars. Colin Walker, head of transport at the ECIU, expressed his reservations, stating: “While pitched as a response to the economic chaos of Trump’s tariffs, these changes could actually make things worse, costing UK consumers. With less onus on manufacturers to compete to sell EVs in the UK, and the government encouraging them to sell more hybrids instead, potentially millions of families could be left to foot [the bill] for more expensive driving.”

Walker’s comments reflect worries about the government’s decision to extend the sales of new hybrid vehicles until 2035, a move criticised by many industry experts who believe it undermines the promotion of fully electric vehicles.

Quentin Willson, founder of FairCharge, a campaign group advocating for policies favouring EVs, condemned the policy as “a grave misstep.” Speaking to the Birmingham Mail, he elaborated: “Well-intentioned drivers are being misled by the alleged benefits of hybrids, which are neither significantly more economical than combustion cars nor better for urban air quality. The softening of the ZEV (Zero Emission Vehicle) mandate allows carmakers to build combustion engines for longer and ease back on EV targets. The UK is currently Europe’s most successful market for EVs, but succumbing to pressure from carmakers to dilute the mandate threatens that success and will allow Chinese carmakers to dominate. This is shortsighted, disappointing and ill-judged government policy.”

Further emphasising the financial benefits of EVs, Edmund King, president of the AA (Automobile Association) and an electric car driver himself, commented: “When I look at the price of petrol and diesel, to be honest, it sends a shiver down my spine.” He pointed to recent figures from the AA which show that petrol costs more than twice the price of home electricity charging per mile, indicating the potential for significant savings with electric vehicles.

Erin Baker, editorial director at Auto Trader, also supported the message of financial prudence for car buyers considering the transition to electric vehicles. She said: “In the long term, electric vehicles can save consumers money, and it’s vital drivers know this. We’re not saying this will be an easy transition but for most people it will be worth it financially.”

This analysis and commentary come as the UK government continues to navigate complex trade and environmental policies, balancing industry pressures with consumer interests and environmental goals. The debate is particularly poignant amidst rising fuel costs and ongoing efforts to meet ambitious carbon reduction targets. The extension of hybrid sales until 2035, while intended to provide a middle ground between conventional petrol cars and fully electric vehicles, has sparked considerable discussion among stakeholders about the best path forward for sustainable and affordable personal transport in the UK.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://eciu.net/media/press-releases/2024/hybrid-sales-rise-but-drivers-paying-double-big-brands-stated-fuelling-costs-analysis> - This source from the Energy and Climate Intelligence Unit (ECIU) supports the claim that hybrid car drivers save only marginal amounts on fuel costs, showing that switching from petrol to a plug-in hybrid electric vehicle (PHEV) results in less than half the fuel savings compared to moving to a full electric vehicle.
* <https://eciu.net/analysis/reports/2024/the-real-life-costs-of-fuelling-a-phev> - This detailed ECIU report provides the real-world fueling costs of PHEVs, highlighting that hybrid vehicles cost significantly more to fuel annually compared to electric vehicles, underpinning the £13 vs. up to £850 savings claim.
* <https://www.gbnews.com/lifestyle/cars/hybrids-cost-expensive-fuel-claims-electric-vehicles> - This article includes commentary from Colin Walker, head of transport at the ECIU, and quotes him expressing concerns over hybrid cars costing more than expected and the UK government policy encouraging hybrids over fully electric vehicles.
* <https://www.businessgreen.com/news/4206405/study-running-costs-plug-hybrids-double-manufacturers-claims> - This BusinessGreen piece cites ECIU’s analysis showing plug-in hybrids have much higher annual fuel costs than manufacturers' claims and discusses the potential negative effects of government policy extending hybrid sales to 2035.
* <https://www.theecoexperts.co.uk/electric-vehicles/phev-drivers-fuel-costs> - This source reiterates that PHEV drivers spend nearly double the predicted amount on fuel annually, details the comparative cost savings of electric vehicles, and aligns with Erin Baker’s and Edmund King’s comments about the financial benefits of electric car ownership.