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Opinion: Gov. Phil Murphy's EV truck mandate will drive inflation for NJ residents

3-minute read

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They say the road to hell is paved with good intentions. But in the case of the Murphy administration's electric truck mandate, the highway to hell is built on wishful electric thinking.

The administration's unworkable Advanced Clean Transportation, or ACT, rule, scheduled to go into effect on Jan. 1, 2025, is based on the false premise that we are anywhere near ready for a mandate that electric trucks start being sold. And as a result, such an unrealistic policy is already beginning to cause disruption in the trucking market. To fully implement ACT will cost hundreds of millions of dollars to implement — a price that will be passed on to every New Jersey consumer and family.

While we all support the overall goal of reducing emissions and a cleaner environment, mandating electric truck fleets is simply not possible now for many reasons. Electric trucks are three times more expensive, they haul less freight per truck due to battery's weight which means more trucks on the road, they take too long to charge, and the charging infrastructure is not yet available.

While inflation has somewhat cooled, affordability is still a huge concern, evidenced by the fact that grocery prices in New Jersey have increased 28% more than the national average in 2024. Everything that arrives at the store, or our front door, gets there via a truck, or multiple trucks, so increased transportation costs are factored into everyday purchases.

We applaud the Murphy administration for steps it has taken to advance the build out of medium and heavy-duty truck charging infrastructure with the recent announcement of a \$250 million multi-state award to that infrastructure, of which New Jersey's share is \$84

million. In July, Gov. Phil Murphy announced a \$100 million award from the federal government to build charging infrastructure for 130 buses in the Meadowlands. That \$100 million for 130 buses at one depot juxtaposed with \$84 million for all trucks. Both projects are slated to be completed in 2029. Relative to a Jan. 1, 2025, mandate for medium and heavy-duty electric truck sales, it is not unfair to characterize these initiatives as way too little and way too late.

Opinion: Blame Murphy's Energy Master Plan for skyrocketing NJ energy costs

We're also encouraged that after years of careful consideration, the state Board of Public Utilities finally announced recently the adoption of minimum filing requirements, which direct the electric utilities to propose new rate structures to account for charging electric trucks. This is a telling statement since charging heavy duty trucks is so expensive we need to re-write a century of rules governing how electric rates are set. setting. But that's the cart before the horse.

Let's be clear. The ACT rules were adopted three years ago, and we are just now witnessing a press conference celebrating plans to build the first and only heavy duty publicly available heavy truck chargers in the state. That may be cause for celebration among the government regulators, but it is a cause for deep concern in the industry and with legislators who are focused on the impact of these rules will have on New Jersey's economy.

We applaud state Sen. Patrick Diegnan and Assemblyman Clinton Calabrese for their reasonable approach and urge the immediate adoption of S-3817 and A-4967, which will delay ACT's implementation by two years. A delay is not only reasonable, but essential for the uninterrupted flow of commerce through our region and across the nation.

Without more time to implement the ACT, this unrealistic rule, based on wishful electric thinking, will raise costs on consumers and threaten to cause severe disruptions to our supply chain nationwide.

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