

Loss of Iran's oil hasn't shuttered China refiners

BUSINESS, 5A

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Americans' demand for EVs outstrips supply



Ford Mustang Mach E electric vehicles are offered for sale at a dealership in Chicago. Hybrids and all-electric vehicles have seen a jump in demand from the oil crisis caused by the war in Iran. SCOTT OLSON/GETTY IMAGES FILE

Production cuts leave fewer cars for buyers

John Paul Helveston
George Washington University
THE CONVERSATION

Within three months of the U.S. and Israeli strikes on Iran on Feb. 28, the average price of gasoline for American drivers climbed from $2.94 to $4.35 a gallon. If there was ever a moment for Americans to switch to electric vehicles, this was it.

From March to May, in fact, sales of hybrid electric vehicles were 18% higher than over the same months in 2025.

But sales of fully electric vehicles were 16% lower from March to May compared with the same months in 2025. Some observers took that as evidence that high gas prices alone wouldn't push Americans toward fully electric cars, but that conclusion misses half the story.

I study car buyers and their preferences, and there is an important distinction between what consumers want and what they can actually buy. Sales reveal what cars people actually bought, but not necessarily what they actually wanted.

When the supply of some kinds of cars can't keep up with demand, prices rise, and that's exactly what happened for electric vehicles in 2026.

An industry in retreat

In 2026, hybrids and all-electric vehicles faced the same jump in demand from the oil crisis. While there were plenty of hybrids available to meet that demand, the same was not true for EVs.

Hybrid production had been growing for years, led by Toyota, which sells about half of the hybrids bought in the United States. As a result, even as sales surged, hybrid inventories on dealer lots were 19% higher in March than they had been a year earlier.

The average new car now sells for about $50,000 and the average new electric vehicle for about $55,000, according to Kelley Blue Book, a company that tracks car prices.

However, EV production had been in retreat since the tax and spending law President Donald Trump signed in July 2025 ended federal tax credits for EVs. Buyers had been able to get up to $7,500 for new EVs and $4,000 for used ones, but that ended after Sept. 30, 2025.

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Mark Longo charged with fraud

Jeff Murray
Elmira Star-Gazette
USA TODAY NETWORK

More legal troubles are brewing for the owners of Peanut the Squirrel, the internet sensation whose seizure by the state Department of Environmental Conservation and subsequent death sparked national outrage.

One of Peanut's owners, Mark J. Longo Jr., 36, of Pine City, has been charged by New York State Police with several felonies following an investigation into alleged mortgage fraud.

Last week, Longo's wife, Daniella Bittner, a native of Germany, was detained by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, allegedly for being an illegal alien.

The investigation into Longo began in December 2024, when the State Police Special Investigations Unit in Rochester received information about financial irregularities involving Longo.

Investigators conducted interviews, executed search warrants and reviewed financial records. They allege Longo used falsified pay stubs, letters and mortgage application documents to obtain a $720,000 residential mortgage.

As a result of the investigation, state police charged Longo with

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Mark Longo, of Pine City, second from right, joined by his wife Daniella, state Assemblyman Jacob Blumencranz, left, and others, discusses the proposed "Peanut's Law" during an Albany news conference April 8, 2025. The law is named after Peanut the Squirrel. PROVIDED BY THE OFFICE OF ASSEMBLYMAN JACOB BLUMENCRANZ

DEC wildlife team rescues trapped black bear in Steuben County

Beth McDermott
Hornell Evening Tribune
USA TODAY NETWORK

An adult black bear caught in a coyote trap on a farm in Canisteo, New York, was freed unharmed after a coordinated rescue by state wildlife officers on Nov. 1.

The bear, a female, was discovered in the trap in Steuben County, according to a community announcement from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

Environmental Conservation Officer Rockefeller, a member of DEC's Division of Law Enforcement Wildlife Response Team, responded to the report and contacted Lt. Lochner, another team member.

Lochner then contacted Bureau of Wildlife Technician Kelly Raab to assist with the rescue.

The three were joined by Wildlife Response Team member Environmental Conservation Officer Johnston and Environmental Conservation Officer trainees Shaffer and Schedel.

After assessing the situation, the team developed a plan to safely remove the trap from the bear's paw. The rescuers used catchpoles and a large board to isolate the bear's foot while Lochner carefully removed the trap.

The operation ended with the adult bear freed without injury.

The trapper had not violated any laws and faced no criminal charges.

DEC praised the officers and wildlife technician for their quick response and successful rescue, according to the announcement.

Video of the bear's release is available at https://youtu.be/uxhx7YT9ktw.

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