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Another Voice: Electric cars are a pleasant way to fight climate change

By **Another Voice** (https://buffalonews.com/author/another-voice/)

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By **Larry Beahan**

I have found a bright spot in all the painful haze of global warming and climate change.

Yes, we are drowning in waste. Oceans are afloat with plastic bags and plastic foam cups, slicked over with oil and algae. The air is foul with diesel exhaust, drinking water booby-trapped with endocrine-altering chemicals, the planet smothered in a carbon dioxide blanket.

And all the remedies seem to require sacrifice, money and unwelcome change.

But there is one delightful way I have found to fight this planet-wrecking plague: a terrific new car, an all-electric 2019 Nissan Leaf.

That Leaf of mine accelerates, in silence, with the G-force sensation of alpine ski jumping. It steers like a baby carriage, stops on a dime and recharges the battery in the process. If I get lost the dashboard navigation system makes sure I get home safely.

I have owned Leafs for four years now and the only maintenance required has been tire rotation; no oil change, grease job or tuneup. Electric power is cheap. I fill her up in my own garage. To top it off, New York State and the federal government contributed \$9,500 to the purchase of this marvelous electric vehicle of mine.

Range anxiety is the rub. My 2016 Leaf had a range of 115 miles. That would get us to Kissing Bridge and back, even with the heater on. But when we took it on a drive to Wilson, to the lakefront home of a friend, we miscalculated. A side trip to Gordie Harper's Bazaar for chocolate eclairs, and the fact that Lake Ontario is downhill over the Niagara escarpment and uphill on the way back, threw us off.

Going back up the escarpment, our available mileage melted off the onboard computer unbelievably fast. We just barely coasted into the Nissan dealership, 2 miles from our house, and plugged into his charger gratefully, then caught our

breath over his coffee and cookies.

My 2019 Leaf has double that range. Still, when we drove to Allegany to show the car off to my sister, it was a little dicey whether we would test Nissan’s guaranteed rescue.

A solution to “range anxiety” lies in the New York Power Authority’s “EVolveNY” program. NYPA has promised to spend up to \$250 million by 2025 on electric vehicle infrastructure. To kick this off they will spend \$40 million by the end of 2020 to install 200 direct current fast chargers at 30-mile intervals along key interstate corridors. The DCFCs are capable, in 10 minutes, of extending an electric car’s range 200 miles.

One DCFC halfway to Wilson would make our chocolate eclair visits a lot more frequent. We might charge up at the dealer’s, too, for old times’ sake and chocolate chippers.

Larry Beahan is conservation chair of the Sierra Club, Niagara Group.

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3

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