America's largest supermarket chain, Cincinnati-based Kroger, recently announced it would install 225 electric vehicle (EV) charging stations at 125 stores across California and Arizona according to an article in the Los Angeles Times.

The company is spending $1.5 million to install 200 so-called "level 2" charging stations that can give an electric car enough charge for roughly 12 to 25 miles in about an hour, and 25 DC (direct current) Fast Chargers that can power up to 40% of an electric vehicle's battery in approximately 20 minutes. Kroger plans to roll out the new stations at its Ralph's and Food 4 Less stores and it has contracted with a California company called Ecotality, which manages the nation's second-largest EV charging station infrastructure network, to handle the installation. The newly built charging stations will be in addition to the 74 already located at Kroger-owned stores in Washington, Oregon, and Texas.

Kroger, and other retailers like Whole Foods and Ikea have created EV charging stations at their stores to lure in environmentally-conscious customers that often have a hard time finding enough places to power up their vehicles, especially with long waits that can accompany a full battery charge. Nationwide, there are about 8,000 public EV charging stations with 25% residing in California - based on estimates from the Energy Information Administration. Retailers also have other incentives to partner with companies like Ecotality which can take advantage of Department of Energy (DOE) grants designed to expand EV infrastructure across the country. Ecotality is matching Kroger's $1.5 million investment with DOE grant funds and will charge customers $1 to $2 an hour to power their vehicles. The proceeds collected will be split 50/50 between the two companies. While the rates are significantly higher than charging at home, both companies expect that it will help reduce 'range anxiety' that some consumers have with purchasing EVs because of a lack of infrastructure and the limited endurance of their car batteries.

By:
Thursday, April 11, 2013 at 11:46 AM
Tags:
Policy Area › Environment › Sustainability › Sustainable Design