Foon Rhee reported on a study questioning whether California will achieve its goal of placing 1.5 million electric vehicles on our roads by 2025, characterizing California as moving “agonizingly slowly” (“California is stuck behind a Prius on electric car goal”; The Numbers Crunch, Dec. 3).

While I share his concern about how quickly California will achieve 1.5 million vehicles, I would hardly describe the growth of California’s electric vehicle market as slow. In 2010, the California New Car Dealers Association recorded only a single electric car sale. Last month, California topped the 250,000 mark, comprising nearly half of nationwide electric vehicle sales. All of this progress has happened in just six years.

The remarkable growth of California’s electric car market in such a short period is far from happenstance. It is the direct result of a strong commitment to a clean vehicle future on the part of the governor, the California Air Resources Board, the Legislature, air quality districts and, increasingly, city leadership. This commitment stems from the knowledge that California’s reliance on gas-powered vehicles has diminished our quality of life, creating pollutants that harm our health and environment. Beyond the numbers, California’s electric vehicles policies are leading the way by ensuring that low-income communities benefit from zero tailpipe emissions. Take the Charge Ahead California Initiative, authored by Senate President Pro Tem Kevin de León. This 2014 law directed ARB to create programs to increase access to clean transportation in low-income communities.

Today, low- and moderate-income Californians in the San Joaquin Valley and Los Angeles area can turn in a high-polluting, older vehicle and receive incentives to purchase a new or used advanced-technology vehicle. Californians in the Bay Area who have little or no credit history can apply for low-interest loans to purchase a clean vehicle. Soon, low-income residents in Sacramento and Los Angeles will be able to participate in innovative electric-car-sharing programs.

Can and must California do more to create the tipping point to a zero-carbon transportation future? Absolutely.

Leaders at all levels of government must hit the accelerator to ensure that California’s electric vehicle policies are expanded to include more Californians. The clean vehicle revolution is off to a strong start, but California must continue to act aggressively in order to enable the state – and the nation – to reach critical climate goals.