Public Editor's Journal

MARGARET SULLIVAN

February 18, 2013, 12:10 pm | 35 Comments

Problems With Precision and Judgment, but Not Integrity, in Tesla Test

By MARGARET SULLIVAN

editor's blog entry

A quick follow-up to my entry on the NYT-inspired "Model S Gate": The New York Times put its Reader Representative Margaret Sullivan on the Tesla Model S case. In an entry published today (Feb. 18), Sullivan concludes that NYT reporter John Broder wasn't as careful as he should have been in following written directions which explain how to properly do a long-distance trip in a Model S. She also chides Tesla for not sufficiently emphasizing the proper long-distance Model S regimen with Broder.

However, the real news in terms of my previous entry in which I contend Tesla CEO Elon Musk is right to take on gas cars on their home field, the long-distance road trip, is that, sadly (believe me, I would *love* for most consumers to give EVs a fair chance), a bunch of the comments below Sullivan's article confirm what I argue in my earlier column: The average person emphasizes *convenience* and *versatility* above ALL other factors when weighing whether to ditch an old technology (gas cars) for a new one (pure EVs).

Check out this doozy of a comment from "Nancy" from Great Neck, complete with "high" caliber grammar and spelling -->

Nancy · Great Neck

The point is to buy a care and drive the care from here to there and not worry about every foot driven. All this exercise showed is that the annoyance of driving a Tesla makes buying a Tesla beyond absurd.

there is too much actual work for me to do to ever want to worry about driving. What nonsense, I will avoid buying a Tesla and avoid such nonsense.

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Believe me, there are many other similar comments below Sullivan's entry.

Pro-EV commentators

Of course, there are many comments from pro-EV folks, most written more eloquently, and with better grammar, than "Nancy's". But unfortunately, "Nancy's" comment is far more representative of the views of the population as a whole than those put forward by EV advocates.

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I still say you are not going to change most of folks' minds on this: **Convenience** and **versatility** – with the gasoline car and its vast network of gas stations the inevitable point of comparison – will continue to be the two most important factors in determining whether large numbers of people do, or do not, leap from gas to pure EVs (unless pure EVs start costing less than comparable gas cars *up front* – sorry, only a small percentage of people actually do the math to figure out long-term cost savings on EVs, solar, or anything else, really.)

That means -- barring some giant leap forward on EV battery technology (which I SO wish we would see) -- we're probably looking at at least 20 years, or more, before pure EVs overtake gasoline cars as the primary mode of transportation in the U.S., if indeed, they ever get to that point (you can bet Big Oil wants to replace gas with Big Hydrogen, or something else that doesn't allow the individualized, democratic fueling possibilities that electricity, especially via home solar, offers!) .

On the bright side, hopefully, by 2030, we'll have 100-percent computer driven cars, something that would not only be much more efficient, but which would save more than a million lives worldwide every year.

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