Tesla’s China plans draw scrutiny from state media

Chinese state media outlet *The Global Times* published a story headlined “Tesla’s new discount policy in Beijing draws concerns over legality on Chinese social media.” The concerns are about license plates.

“On the edge of the law”
Tesla posted on Weibo that customers would get zero percent financing and a license plate rental service if they live in Beijing. There’s just one hitch: license plate rental services are “technically illegal,” the founder of a Beijing-based auto consultancy told *Business Insider.* In the *Global Times* post, a Chinese netizen is quoted as telling the company directly that the license plate offering was “on the edge of the law.”

The number of license plates offered in Beijing is limited; a bimonthly drawing awards one license plate for every 2,000 applications, according to *Bloomberg.* The city’s limits are meant in part to ease traffic jams, and also to avoid adding too much pollution to the city’s air. While two-thirds of the 100,000 licenses issued in 2019 are reserved for electric vehicle owners, even they face wait times as long as eight years for a license, according to *China Daily*.

When *The Global Times* requested comment from Tesla, the company said it “does not obtain or lease car plates in China, and we’ve updated our Weibo post to reflect that.”

Tesla is expanding in China, and is building a Gigafactory there to manufacture cars for that market. There have been missteps — for instance, in April when Tesla dropped prices on its cars, some people who’d already bought Teslas protested.

https://www.theverge.com/2019/6/6/18655484/tesla-china-license-plate-beijing