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Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak gives the thumbs up after a test drive of the Tesla model S at the Parliament building yesterday. Pic by Sairien Nafis

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## Electric vehicle hub plan gets Tesla boost

KUALA LUMPUR: The government has received a proposal from Malaysia Green Technology Corp (Greentech) to bring in US-based Tesla Motors to Malaysia.

This is in line with the government's aim to promote the usage of energy-efficient and electric vehicles.

Energy, Green Technology and Water Minister Datuk Seri Maximus Ongkili said the effort would promote Malaysia as a centre of excellence for electric vehicle technology as well as the main service centre for such vehicles in the Asean region.

At the moment, Greentech Malaysia has brought in two Tesla S cars for research and development.

"Malaysia will benefit as an electric vehicle development hub in the Asean region while allowing other electric vehicle models to be brought into Malaysia," he said after the Green Technology and Climate Change Council meeting yesterday.

The meeting was chaired by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak at the Parliament building. After the meeting, Najib had a test drive of the car from Parliament to PWTC.

The research and development for electric cars was one of the three proposals brought to the council.

The second proposal was for the government to set up a RM400 million Green Equity Financing Fund, to invest in green technology start-up firms from next year onwards.

Ongkili said the fund and the structure would be approved by the Economic Planning Unit and managed by Malaysia Venture Capital Management Bhd.

"The fund is to invest in eligible green technology companies which are still in the early stage and also those in expansion stage," he told reporters.

Ongkili said the fund would assist green technology entrepreneurs to

overcome challenges and secure financing from banking institutions as some have insufficient capital and security.

"Discussions will be held with the Finance Ministry on the implementation mechanism soon," the minister added.

The third proposal is by Malaysia Airports Holdings Bhd to implement a Carbon Neutral Airport Project.

Ongkili said the council had agreed to the airport operator's idea to replace its vehicles with electric vehicles at Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) and klia2.

"KLIA and klia2 would be the first two airports to use electric vehicles in the Asean region.

"The council supports the proposal and the ministry will fully cooperate to realise MAHB's initiative especially in preparing infrastructure for electric vehicle charging stations in KLIA and klia2," he added.