
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Transportation

PROVINCE GIVES GREEN LIGHT TO ZERO EMISSION VEHICLES

VICTORIA – As part of the Province’s efforts to take action on climate change, the B.C. government is moving forward with a pilot project to enable the broader use of zero emission electric vehicles across British Columbia, Transportation Minister Kevin Falcon announced today.

“This government’s goal is to reduce B.C.’s greenhouse gas emissions by at least 33 per cent below current levels by 2020,” said Falcon. “This is an aggressive target that sets a new standard in transportation, and we are proud to deliver creative solutions to work towards reaching our goal.”

British Columbia is the first province to allow the use of zero emission electric vehicles (which can range in appearance from a small-sized car to a small mini-van) on public roads.

The government is introducing a change to the Motor Vehicle Act Regulations officially recognizing zero emission electric vehicles. This regulation would allow the vehicles to travel without flashing lights and warning signage on certain roads with a maximum posted speed of 50 km/h where appropriate and safe. The ministry will work with municipal partners and industry stakeholders to explore opportunities to pilot the use of zero emission electric vehicles in areas they are well suited for, such as parks, ferry terminals, university campuses, airport terminals and resort communities.

“Our government is taking steps that both reduce the causes and the impacts of climate change, and improve air quality and public health,” said Environment Minister Barry Penner. “Promoting the use of zero emission electric vehicles is important because they are one of the cleanest, most environmentally friendly types of vehicles in existence.”

“British Columbia is a leader when it comes to promoting clean transportation alternatives,” said Falcon. “We already have a variety of projects underway, such as green taxis, hydrogen fuel cell buses, expanded transit service, and cycling infrastructure development. Encouraging the broader use of zero emission electric vehicles is another eco-friendly initiative, and we are pleased to provide a positive example to the rest of the country.”

Zero emission electric vehicles run on electricity stored in batteries that are recharged by plugging into a standard electrical outlet. These vehicles are environmentally friendly, with no tail pipe exhaust, no gas required, and lower fuel and maintenance costs than a conventional vehicle. They also provide a noise-free, smooth ride.

The regulatory change is scheduled to come into effect early in the new year. The government will work closely with municipal partners and industry to monitor vehicle operation and user feedback until 2009 to determine the rate of interest and success.

Media Jeff Knight
contact: Public Affairs Bureau
 Ministry of Transportation
 250 356-7707

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