

HOV LANE ACCESS FOR GREEN PLATED ELECTRIC VEHICLES

The Ministry of Transportation is proposing to amend the High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) regulation to run a 5-year pilot project allowing single-occupant, eligible electric vehicles access to the HOV lane if they are registered and plated with “green vehicle” licence plates.

Ontario recently committed to support the emerging electric vehicles market entry. This pilot project will support the implementation of the Electric Vehicle program. The Electric Vehicle program supports two major initiatives of the Ontario government: building a green economy and fighting climate change.

Background:

- As an incentive of the Electric Vehicle program, an additional benefit to purchasing an electric vehicle and a green plate will be having priority access to HOV lanes on 400-series highways until 2015.
- Green plated electric vehicles will be exempt from the two-person occupancy requirement. Only electric vehicles that have a green plate will be permitted to access the HOV lanes with a single occupant. Non-green plated vehicles with a single occupant will be restricted to the regular travel lanes.
- HOV lanes are currently reserved for vehicles carrying two or more people and offer travel time savings as an enticement for people to carpool or choose transit rather than driving alone. HOV lanes currently operate on Highways 403, 404, and 417, and will be completed on a portion of the Queen Elizabeth Way in 2011.

Proposed Amendment:

- An amendment to the existing Minister's Regulation governing HOV lane use (Ontario Regulation 620-05) is required to permit access to HOV lanes by single-occupant green plated vehicles.
- Because this is a pilot program, the amendment will include wording that it will be revoked in 5 years time.

Information Signs:

- New signage will be required on provincial highways with HOV lanes to notify drivers that green plated electric vehicles are permitted to use the HOV lanes. The information signs will be removed once the pilot program is over.