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# B.C. to re-launch electric car rebates

By Michael Mui, 24 Hours Vancouver

Wednesday, March 11, 2015 5:36:30 PDT PM



Charging infrastructure at home is more effective than building public chargers, according to Simon Fraser University research (REUTERS)

The B.C. government is re-launching its Clean Energy Vehicle Incentives program that provided rebates for people who purchased electric cars among other grants for green infrastructure.

In a statement, Ministry of Energy and Mines spokesman David Haslam said Wednesday the program is receiving \$10.5 million over the next three years.

He said \$7.5 million will go to “point-of-sale incentives, and dealer and sales staff incentives for electric and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles.”

A smaller chunk, \$1.5 million, will go to developing charging and hydrogen fuelling infrastructure, \$1 million help “assist fleets” to adopt electric vehicles, and the rest — \$500,000 — to go to training, research, development and public outreach.

Simon Fraser University environment researcher Jonn Axsen, who just helped complete a national study on charging infrastructure, said the money is good — but doesn't go far enough.

"In terms of the split-up of funding, I'm not saying they're doing it wrong, but this will not create a world full of electric vehicles in the future," he said.

Instead, Axsen wants government to examine broad policies, similar to what has been adopted in California, for example, where there's a manufacturer requirement that a certain percentage of vehicles sold in the state must be emission-free.

"You're not going to build a full market unless you have a strong policy that will compete with other regions," he said.


"If that policy was in place, B.C. government wouldn't have to go around and educate anybody, it would then be in the manufacturers' incentive to go figure out how to make the vehicles available in B.C."

B.C. government has also focused significantly on providing funding for public charging infrastructure. Axsen said his findings indicate public charging isn't the way to go.

"Demand wasn't strongly associated with the knowledge of public charging — it was associated with having access to home charging," he said.

Many in B.C. already have chargers at home, but they're likely "level one" chargers, which means it could take up to 30 hours, Axsen said, to charge a pure electric car like one of the Tesla models.

If funding were to go to build infrastructure for charging, he said, the money would be better used to support "level two" charging technology — which uses 220-volt outlets about three-to-six times faster than their counterparts — for installation in homes. Each level-two home station usually costs about \$1,000.

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