

Feds invest in charging stations, water improvements

The Government of Canada has made investments to promote the use of electric vehicles locally and to further protect drinking water as flooding continues to increase in York Region.

Last week, Newmarket-Aurora MP Tony Van Bynen announced the Feds had made an investment of \$350,000 to help fund 70 chargers for electric vehicles in all nine York Region municipalities.

‘It is about giving Canadians the confidence that buying these vehicles won't mean giving up convenience or limiting their range of travels,’ said Mr. Van Bynen in the announcement, which was made over Zoom on November 9. It is a key part of our government's commitment to building a cleaner economy.

‘Transportation is essential to [this] because 25 per cent of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions come from vehicles we drive. That is why we have set an ambitious goal that by 2040, 100 per cent of light duty vehicles sold in Canada will produce zero emissions. Today is part of the \$600 million we have announced over the past four years to transform the way we power vehicles that move our people and goods around our towns and cities and across our country. This includes investments to build a national network for charging stations for electric vehicles as well as establishing hydrogen stations in metropolitan centres and natural gas refuelling stations along key freight corridors.’

Heralding last week's announcement was York Region Chair Wayne Emmerson who said it dovetailed with the Region's key strategic priority of achieving zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2051.

‘As an organization, we have long been a leader in taking steps to reduce energy consumption through innovation and forward-thinking,’ he said. ‘Over the last several years, Regional Council has invested in green technology to reduce our carbon footprint. With the support of our Federal partners and the Canadian Urban Transit Research and Innovation Consortium, York Region has been piloting six electrical buses to reduce fuel consumption and gain hands-on experience in the field of electric transit vehicles. We are also taking steps to integrate hybrid and electric plug-in vehicles into our corporate fleet. We believe in a clean energy future for our growing population.’

‘Today's investment is part of a \$900,000 infrastructure project to support public demand for zero emission vehicles. The 70 charging stations to be installed at various locations across the Region will be available to anyone, including York Regional staff and the public.’

This investment wasn't the only measure made by the Federal Government last Monday towards a greener future for York Region.

\$18.1 million will be coming to York for measures related to protecting local water supplies from extreme weather. The funds are earmarked from the Federal Government's Disaster Mitigation & Adaptation Fund (DMAF), with the Regional Municipality of York contributing a further \$27 million.

‘The northern York Region's water supply, which is primarily sourced from lake water, is regularly impacted by extreme weather,’ said the Region in a statement. ‘The investment in groundwater treatment upgrades will improve the long-term reliability and robustness of the interconnected local groundwater supply system that is located in four communities.’

Added Mr. Emmerson: ‘Like most communities around the world, York Region is experiencing the impacts of climate change. Through the support of our federal partners, we continue to invest in critical infrastructure improvements to build resiliency in York Region's groundwater supply system while also safeguarding the health of residents today and in the future.’

By Brock Weir Editor Local Journalism Initiative Reporter