



City Councillor  
**Dianne Saxe**  
Ward 11, University-Rosedale

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September 18th, 2023

Re EC 6.6

Dear Economic Development Committee,

As Council environmental champion, I am writing to express my strong support for staff's recommendations to require the vehicle for hire industry to lead the way in Toronto's transition to zero emission vehicles. This transition is an essential part of our climate commitments, and will also have benefits for human health due to its impact on air quality and noise.

The current vehicle for hire fleet is unusually old, due to the emergency extensions on vehicle age granted during the pandemic. Older vehicles produce a disproportionately large amount of air pollution, due to their high consumption of fossil fuels and weaker pollution controls. They also have high operating costs, especially when oil prices are comparatively high.

Oil prices fluctuate unpredictably, which can play havoc with family finances. Now that battery costs have come down so far, and are continuing to fall, vehicle for hire owners and operators will benefit financially from their lower total cost of ownership. This is especially true if they can charge their car overnight and benefit from Toronto Hydro's ultra low overnight rate of 2.4 cents a kilowatt hour. This dramatically cuts the cost of operating a vehicle which runs many hours a day. Battery improvements also mean that zero emission vehicles increasingly have battery lives well in excess of the 185 km that an average vehicle for hire in Toronto travels each day. This increasingly resolves the challenge of vehicle charging during the working day.

Ontario has ample electricity available to charge a large fleet of zero emission vehicles, provided that most charging takes place outside peak hours. The technology to properly manage charging times is rapidly expanding, including the innovative software provided by Toronto based SWTCH. Toronto Hydro understands the distribution system upgrades that are necessary to support electrification of transportation and buildings in Toronto, and will shortly file its application to the Ontario Energy Board for the funds necessary to do so.

The Toronto Parking Authority is building out Toronto's public EV charging system. The City is currently consulting the public on their needs for this system. Vehicle manufacturers across the world are ramping up their offerings of zero emission vehicles, and more used zero emission vehicles are becoming available for purchase.

In other words, there is no longer any reason to wait. The extraordinary fires, drought, floods, and heat of this summer have again demonstrated, if further proof were necessary, that we are in the midst of a climate emergency. Global heating will overwhelm our ability to adapt, unless we rapidly cut consumption of fossil fuels. Regulations like this one are an essential part of Council's responsibility to take urgent climate action without further delay.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "D Saxe". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter "D" being large and stylized, and the last letter "e" having a long, sweeping tail.

Councillor Dianne Saxe  
Ward 11, University–Rosedale