

HYBRID VEHICLE REBATES

I recently received a list of concerns from a constituent on the Energy Efficiency Incentive Program with a specific focus on the rebates available for hybrid vehicles. In principle, the program delivered by the energy alliance on behalf of the G.N.W.T. is a really good program.

The primary intent of the program is to help residents of the N.W.T. reduce their energy costs; however, with any new program there are some hurdles that become obvious during its implementation. In the case of this program, one of the difficulties, in my opinion, is that it limits choice. For example, the program is limited to vehicles that can be purchased in the N.W.T. only. This means that any vehicle that meets the criteria for rebate but isn't supplied by a local dealer won't be covered.

Now, I understand the importance and value of buying North. For maintenance and servicing purposes, I personally would choose to buy a vehicle from a Northern vendor. This is not the same for everyone. Some people have preference bases on brand. Some people would prefer to buy a Honda, a Nissan, a Volkswagen or even a Smart Car. If they did, they would be ineligible for the rebate.

To me, this seems to go against the primary intent of the program, which is to help residents of the N.W.T. reduce their energy costs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

I believe the program should be reviewed so that the primary intent is met. This can be done by removing the restrictions on providing the rebate for Northern residents who choose to buy vehicles that are not available through local N.W.T. vendors: the Nissan, the Volkswagen, the Hondas and Smart cars. However, there is value in supporting local Northern business. To address this, the program could be modified to require that an eligible vehicle available through a Northern vendor must be purchased in the North in order for the purchaser to receive the rebate.

These changes would allow our residents the choice they desire and still encourage them to buy products which help them reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reduce their energy costs. This is good for everyone.

At the appropriate time I will be asking the Minister responsible for Environment and Natural Resources questions concerning the Energy Efficiency Incentive Program.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.