

NEW ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAMS COMING TO DURHAM

The Ontario government is launching new energy efficiency programs, including the Home Renovation Savings Program, to help families and businesses in the Durham Region save money. The programs are part of a new \$10.9 billion, 12-year investment in energy efficiency, the largest in Canada's history.

"These new Energy Efficiency Programs that all Durham residents have access to will lower energy bills, put more megawatts into Ontario's energy grid, and ultimately put more money back into your pockets," said Todd McCarthy, Member of Provincial Parliament for Durham.

"While the previous Liberal government skyrocketed energy prices, our government is taking a different approach that puts affordability at the forefront."

The new Home Renovation Savings Program will launch on January 28, 2025, and offer rebates of up to 30 per cent for home energy efficiency renovations and improvements, including new win-

dows, doors, insulation, air sealing, smart thermostats, and heat pumps, as well as the Home Renovation Savings Program, to help families and businesses in the Durham Region save money. The programs are part of a new \$10.9 billion, 12-year investment in energy efficiency, the largest in Canada's history.

"As the demand for electricity continues to rise, we're giving families and small businesses more ways to save money and energy as we launch the largest energy efficiency program in Canadian history," said Stephen Lecce, Minister of Energy and Electrification. "Ontario's new Home Renovation Savings Program will put more money back into the Durham Region, covering up to 30 per cent of the costs on energy efficiency products. We will expand this program again in 2025, including rebates for energy efficient appliances, to further reduce energy bills and demand on the grid."

The government's Affordable Energy Act, which came into force on December 4, 2024, ensures the new Home

Renovation Savings Program, and other program offerings, will be expanded to homeowners who heat their homes by propane and oil, instead of being restricted to those who heat with electricity, as it was under previous governments. The province is also expanding the popular Peak Perks program with a new program specifically targeted to small businesses, including convenience stores and restaurants. Businesses will receive a financial incentive of \$75 upon initial enrollment in the program and \$20 per year for each eligible smart thermostat connected to a central air conditioning system or heat pump unit.

In addition to the two new energy efficiency programs, the province will continue to support 12 Save on Energy programs, including the highly popular Retrofit Program for business, as well as other programs geared to low-income households, businesses, municipalities, institutions, the agricultural sector, industry and on-reserve First Nation communities.

By 2036, it is forecasted that

this expansion of energy efficiency programs will reduce the province's peak demand by 3,000 MW – the equivalent of taking three million homes off the grid.

The province's \$10.9 billion investment is also estimated to result in \$23.1 billion in electricity system benefits, thereby saving ratepayers \$12.2 billion in electricity system costs by avoiding the build out of new generation. Expanding energy efficiency programs to save families money is just one way the government is meeting the province's rapidly growing demand for electricity. Ontario's Affordable Energy Future: The Pressing Case for More Power outlines the challenges facing the province as demand for electricity continues to rapidly grow, as well as the government's all-of-the-above approach to meet this demand, including:

- Energy Planning – Developing the province's first integrated energy plan, including all energy resources, including electricity, natural gas, and other fuels to ensure the province's ener-

gy needs are met in a coordinated and long-term manner.

- Nuclear Energy – Advancing clean, reliable, and affordable nuclear power through predevelopment work at Bruce Power on the province's first large-scale nuclear build in 30 years, four small modular reactors at Darlington and supporting OPG's plan for refurbishing the Pickering Nuclear Generation Station.

- New Transmission Infrastructure – Designating and prioritizing transmission lines in Southwestern, Northeastern and Eastern Ontario that will power job creators, including EV and EV battery manufacturing and clean steel production.

- Additional Competitive Procurements – Launching the largest competitive procurement of clean energy resources in the province's history in addition to successfully recontracting existing capacity resources at about a 30 per cent discount.

The Home Renovation Savings Program will launch on January 28, 2025, and interested homeowners can sign up in advance today. All

other programs are available now.

The new Home Renovation Savings Program will provide 'one-window' access for all home energy efficiency upgrades through Save on Energy and Enbridge Gas conservation programs.

The Independent Electricity System Operator has forecasted that electricity demand will increase by 75 per cent by 2050 – the equivalent of four and a half cities the size of Toronto.

The increased demand stems primarily from Ontario's rapid increase in population, new manufacturing facilities, advanced technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) data centres, the electrification of industry, and the charging energy required for electric vehicles.

Ontario's new and enhanced energy efficiency programs for electricity customers will be an increase from the government's previous expansion of energy efficiency programs to over \$1 billion over four years.

ARE 407 TOLL INCREASES TO HIGH?

Tolls and fees have changed, while new toll zones and vehicle classifications have been introduced. With the changes, INsauga.com has taken a look at how much it now costs to take the highway during rush hour.

Below is a look at how much it's currently estimated to cost for light vehicles to take certain routes on Highway 407 on weekdays between 3:30 p.m. and 6 p.m. compared to last year.

Highway 427 to Highway 404 (Eastbound)
With a transponder: \$21.88
Previously: \$18.47
Increase of: \$3.41

Without a transponder: \$27.08

Previously: \$22.67
Increase of: \$4.41
Highway 404 to Highway 427 (Westbound)
With a transponder: \$20.05
Previously: \$16.95
Increase of: \$3.10

Without a transponder: \$25.25
Previously: \$21.15
Increase of: \$4.10
Highway 427 to York-Durham Line (Eastbound)
With a transponder: \$34.58
Previously: \$29.72
Increase of: \$4.86
Without a transponder: \$39.78

Previously: \$33.92
Increase of: \$5.86

York-Durham Line to Highway 427 (Westbound)
With a transponder: \$30.83
Previously: \$26.47
Increase of: \$4.36
Without a transponder: \$36.03

Previously: \$30.67
Increase of: \$5.36
Highway 410 to Highway 404 (Eastbound)
With a transponder: \$30.63
Previously: \$25.80
Increase of: \$4.83
Without a transponder: \$35.83
Previously: \$30.00
Increase of: \$5.83

Highway 404 to Highway 410 (Westbound)

With a transponder: \$28.29
Previously: \$23.84
Increase of: \$4.45
Without a transponder: \$33.49
Previously: \$28.04
Increase of: \$5.45

Entire length of Highway 407, from the QEW to Highway

35/115 (Eastbound)

With a transponder: \$95.76
Previously: \$86.60
Increase of: \$9.16
Without a transponder: \$100.96
Previously: \$90.80
Increase of: \$10.16

Entire length of Highway 407, from Highway 35/115 to the QEW (Westbound)

With a transponder: \$92.79

Previously: \$82.46
Increase of: \$10.33
Without a transponder: \$97.99
Previously: \$86.66
Increase of: \$11.33

Is it any wonder that no one uses the 407 system. Way to expensive for most on minimum wage.



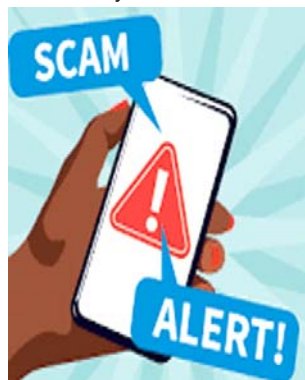
Region warns residents to be aware new text scam

Durham Region has warned residents about a new type of text message scam that started going around during the holidays.

These messages falsely claim that recipients must pay an overdue traffic fine and directs them to Durham Region's website for payment.

The region advises: These messages are not from Durham Region / The Regional Municipality of Durham.

Do not click on any links, respond, or provide any personal information. If you receive such a message, please report it and delete it immediately.



The Town of Whitby has announced that the contamination in the harbour has been traced to an adjacent upstream property along Pringle Creek.

"Over time, the contaminated sediments were carried downstream into Whitby Harbour. The sediment in Whitby Harbour and a small area of Pringle Creek needs to be cleaned remediated to reduce potential risks," said a town statement. It said the Whitby Harbour remediation project is being completed by Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO). "Work started this fall and will be complete in fall 2026."

Whitby Harbour is federal property owned by DFO. The Town of Whitby leases the property for the Whitby Marina, and a portion is sub-leased to the Whitby Yacht Club. This project is being undertaken because sediment at the bottom of the harbour contains levels high levels of chemicals called dioxins and furans that could be harmful to fish, birds, and humans

The town said remediation of the upstream properties along Pringle Creek was started in 2008 by the province. "Since the early 2000s, many environmental studies have been undertaken at Pringle Creek and Whitby Harbour to determine the extent and risks of the chemicals. "The studies found that the risks to birds and mammals are low.

The risks to humans and fish are moderate and need to be managed," the town said. It said contaminated sediment is being removed by hydraulic dredging and placed in a temporary dewatering area. De-watered materials will then be trucked off-site to a licensed disposal facility. The area proposed for temporary de-watering is the portion of Victoria Field, north of the Gordon Street parking lot. The dewatering area will be constructed with two layers of geotextile liners at the bottom and sides. The liners will act as an impermeable barrier to prevent any potential leaching into the ground.

DFO says information collected to date indicates composition of the dredged sediment will not result in air emission or odour issues during the drying process, the town said. The dredged sediment will stay wet while on site, meaning dust should not be an issue. If the sediment does dry out, a specialized fabric (geotextile) will be used as a cover to prevent dust.

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