

Government initiative needed to boost electric vehicle use

July 16 2015, by Carol Thorbes

Canadians want electric vehicles but governments need to help support the market, according to a team of Simon Fraser University researchers. The team has found more than one third of Canadian buyers want an electric vehicle—particularly a plug-in hybrid like the Chevrolet Volt. However, less than one per cent of vehicle sales in Canada are electric because of low consumer awareness and limited vehicle choice. The researchers hope that policymakers and politicians will take note of their two recent studies, as discussions on climate change ramp up locally and globally.

The Sustainable Transportation Research Team, led by Professor Jonn Axsen and adjunct professor Suzanne Goldberg in the School of Resource and Environmental Management (REM), has authored [Electrifying Vehicles: Insights from the Canadian Plug-in Electric Vehicle Study](#) and [Preference and lifestyle heterogeneity among potential plug-in electric vehicle buyers](#). Both reports are now available on the studies' [webpage](#). The latter report was published in *Energy Economics*.

"Electric vehicles are not likely to make up more than one percent of vehicle sales in the next decade and no more than four or five per cent by 2030," says Axsen. But, adds Goldberg, "There is hope [electric vehicles](#) could grow to more than 20 per cent of vehicle sales by 2030 with policies that increase these vehicles' availability and variety, such as California's Zero Emissions Vehicle Mandate."

The studies found that awareness of electric vehicles is low—two-thirds of consumers are not familiar with those currently on the market. Also, supply is limited with about 10 models available in Canada at select dealerships.

The researchers say electric vehicles have the potential to significantly reduce CO₂ emissions in B.C. Almost a third of the province's [emissions](#) come from transportation. Electric vehicles produce 80 to 90 per cent less [greenhouse gas emissions](#) than gasoline vehicles.

Provided by Simon Fraser University

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