
From: Web NoReply
Sent: Monday, May 5, 2025 4:59 PM
To: City Council
Subject: Comments - Jory Vermette - Saskatoon Transit Full-Fleet Zero Emission Bus Implementation Plan – CUTRIC Report
Attachments: SCH_TransitFull_FleetZeroEmissionBus_052025.docx.pdf
Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

--- Replies to this email will go to saskatoonclimatehub@gmail.com---

Submitted on Monday, May 5, 2025 - 16:41

Submitted by user: [REDACTED]

Submitted values are:

I have read and understand the above statements.: Yes

I do not want my comments placed on a public agenda. They will be shared with members of Council through their online repository.: No

I only want my comments shared with the Mayor or my Ward Councillor.: No

Date: Monday, May 05, 2025

To: Her Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council

Pronouns: He/him/his

First Name: Jory

Last Name: Vermette

Email: saskatoonclimatehub@gmail.com

I live outside of Saskatoon: No

Saskatoon Address and Ward:

Address: [REDACTED] Churchill Dr

Ward: Ward 5

Name of the organization or agency you are representing (if applicable): Saskatoon Climate Hub

What do you wish to do ?: Submit Comments

What meeting do you wish to speak/submit comments ? (if known): STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

What agenda item do you wish to comment on ?: 6.2.1 Saskatoon Transit Full-Fleet Zero Emission Bus Implementation Plan – CUTRIC Report [TS2025-0504]

Comments:

I am submitting this letter on behalf of the Saskatoon Climate Hub, written by myself and my colleague at the Saskatoon Climate Hub, Sherry Olson.

Attachments:

Will you be submitting a video to be vetted prior to council meeting?: No



SASKATOON CLIMATE HUB

saskatoonclimatehub@gmail.com

Saskatoon Climate Hub

@SaskatoonClimateHub



Saskatoon, May 5, 2025

Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development, & Community Service
222 3rd Ave North
Saskatoon, SK S7K 0J5

Dear Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development, & Community Service

The Saskatoon Climate Hub (SCH) is writing to you regarding the CUTRIC report on the *Saskatoon Transit Full-Fleet Zero Emission Bus Implementation Plan*. This report, along with the accompanying appendix, provides valuable insights into the opportunities and challenges associated with transitioning to zero-emission buses (ZEBs) in Saskatoon. **While financial and technological hurdles are acknowledged, it is essential that broader environmental, health, and social considerations are equally weighted in the City's decision-making process.**

The 12-month battery electric bus (BEB) pilot conducted in 2020 demonstrated that BEBs can perform effectively under Saskatoon's winter conditions. Since March 2025, two BEBs have been in operation with performance and distance metrics comparable to diesel buses. Although one maintenance-related issue was reported, the resolution of such problems suggests that integration of ZEBs into the local transit system is both feasible and promising.

While the report focuses primarily on the financial aspects of ZEB adoption, additional cost-benefit factors warrant significant and attentive consideration:

- **Environmental Benefits:** Despite the current carbon intensity of Saskatchewan's power grid, ZEBs produce zero tailpipe emissions. This contributes to improved air quality, particularly in areas with high transit activity, and positions the City to capitalize on future emissions reductions as the power grid becomes greener. Given the long standing federal mandate to phase out coal by 2030, the province is expected to phase out its coal operations or implement technology to reduce and capture coal emissions therefore, we can equally anticipate a rapidly cleaner grid.



SASKATOON CLIMATE HUB

saskatoonclimatehub@gmail.com

Saskatoon Climate Hub

@SaskatoonClimateHub



- **Health Impacts:** Diesel exhaust is a known carcinogen linked to respiratory illnesses. A shift to ZEBs would enhance air quality and contribute to long-term health improvements, potentially reducing public healthcare costs and enhancing quality of life.
- **Noise Reduction:** ZEBs, including BEBs and hydrogen fuel cell electric buses (FCEBs), operate more quietly than diesel buses. This results in reduced noise pollution for both residents and transit users, contributing to more livable neighborhoods and an improved rider experience.
- **Indirect Cost Savings:** The broader economic impacts of climate change—ranging from insurance costs due to extreme weather events to increased food prices—underscore the value of reducing greenhouse gas emissions as rapidly as possible. Investing in ZEBs is a proactive strategy to mitigate such long-term costs both financially and to the community.
- **Social Equity:** The appendix to the report highlights the potential for ZEBs to benefit vulnerable communities disproportionately affected by air pollution and noise. Prioritizing these areas in fleet electrification plans can support greater health equity for all residents of Saskatoon.
- **Long-Term Cost Efficiency:** Although initial capital costs for ZEBs are high, advancements in technology are expected to reduce already reduced maintenance and lifecycle costs over time. A phased approach would allow the City to take advantage of these trends without having to play catch up at a later date.
- **Climate Leadership:** The transition to ZEBs is identified as a priority in Saskatoon's Climate Action Plan. Moving forward with a clear and committed implementation strategy would position Saskatoon as a leader in sustainable urban transportation. The request to amend Saskatoon's Climate Action Plan to shift the goal posts positions us negatively when it comes to attracting investment and residents.



SASKATOON
CLIMATE HUB

saskatoonclimatehub@gmail.com

Saskatoon Climate Hub

@SaskatoonClimateHub



It also creates a fundamental distrust in the City's ability to meet their prior commitments.

Given these factors, expanding the current pilot program and developing a phased transition plan is absolutely necessary. A target of incorporating a defined percentage of ZEBs—such as 50%—in each fleet renewal cycle would align sustainability goals with fiscal planning. Continued collaboration with federal and provincial governments will be crucial in securing necessary funding for infrastructure and technology to prevent sudden short falls in funding that have recently occurred. Additionally, further contingency plans are necessary to avoid repeated situations where plans are at risk of falling through. Establishing a dedicated working group to monitor advancements in vehicle and energy technology may also support more agile and informed decision-making as well as prioritizing triple bottom line approaches and climatic impacts in assessments and recommendations.

While challenges remain, the long-term benefits of transitioning to zero-emission transit—across environmental, health, economic, and social dimensions—present a compelling and necessary case for action. Advancing this initiative is consistent with the City's climate objectives and vision for a sustainable future. For both the confidence of our community and for a resilient City that can face climate change head on, we urge you to reject the administration's recommendation in favour of a strategy that incorporates a full scope of costs and benefits.

Sincerely,

Sherry Olson and Jory Vermette, on behalf of the Saskatoon Climate Hub