

Province banning road tolls, freezing driver's licence fees

By Brian Lockhart

The Ontario government recently announced new legislation that, if passed, would ban tolls on provincial highways.

This ban would apply to the Don Valley Parkway, Gardiner Expressway, and the province's 400 series highways.

"Our government under the leadership of Premier Ford is on a mission to keep costs down for families and businesses," said Prabmeet Sarkaria, Minister of Transportation. "First, we scrapped the tolls on Highways 412 and 418, now we're protecting drivers from the costs of new tolls. Together with our cut in the gas tax and eliminating the licence plate sticker fee, we're saving drivers hundreds of dollars every year."

The province is also proposing to save drivers time by automating the licence plate renewal process starting this summer, saving vehicle owners more than 900,000 hours each year. This follows recent action by the government to eliminate the cost of renewing your vehicle permit.

Until the automatic renewal process begins, drivers are still required to renew their licence plates at no cost. This can be done online or in person at ServiceOntario.

The automatic renewal process will only be available to drivers in good standing who do not have outstanding fines or tickets.

The measures are part of upcoming legislation that will kick off the spring sitting of the legislature on February 20, 2024.

With Ontario's population projected to grow by five million people over the next decade, the province is moving forward with building Highway 413 and the Bradford Bypass.

Over the next 10 years, Ontario is also investing more than \$70 billion to transform public transit in the province, which includes the largest subway expansion in Canadian history, including the Ontario Line, the Scarborough Subway Extension, the Eglinton Crosstown West Extension, and the Yonge North Subway Extension.