

Serge Bergeron

From: "Serge Bergeron" <serge@bergeron.ca>
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Cc: <OHANDJE@tc.gc.ca>; <MACDOUA@tc.gc.ca>; "Robert Lamb" <rlamb@videotron.ca>
Sent: January 19, 2008 3:13 PM
Subject: Eco rebate on new imported Prius

Dear Mrs Mary Komarynsky ADM,

I am writing to you as a very concerned Canadian citizen and also as a founding member of the group "CarsWithoutBorders" (CWB). I would like to express our dissatisfaction with the application of the Eco-Auto rebate program with regards to hybrid vehicles imported from the United States and the lack of openness and clarity from your departmental officials.

As you are certainly aware, this is a significant difference in pricing between Canadian automobile pricing and American pricing. This has caused a large increase in US imports into Canada in 2007 and most expect this to continue in 2008. I have personally imported a 2008 Toyota Prius Hybrid automobile that effectively gets 71 MPG or 4.0 Litre / 100KM.

I understand the program is a initiative of the new Conservative Government and I think it is an excellent means of helping many Canadians make the jump into more fuel efficient vehicles. The purpose of tTransport Canada ecoAuto program is described on your site:

"Canadian drivers are looking to lower their fuel bills. The ecoAUTO Rebate Program gives them a good way to do it! As part of the Government of Canada's plan to protect the environment, the ecoAUTO Rebate Program encourages Canadians to buy fuel-efficient vehicles. How? It offers rebates from \$1000 to \$2000, to people who, beginning March 20, 2007, buy or enter a long-term lease (12 months or more) for a fuel-efficient vehicle."

The program rules seem very logical and are encouraging citizens to buy high fuel efficient automobiles. There is however on your TC web site, in the Q&A section, a very disappointing exception for imported vehicles. It is stated as follows:

14. ***I bought an eligible vehicle in th United States, can I apply for the rebate? Imported vehicles are not eligible for the ecoAUTO Rebate Program. Only vehicles that have been purchased or leased (12 months or more) in Canada on or after March 20th, 2007 are eligible for the rebate.***

As a representative of CarsWithoutBorders consumers group, I can advise that this is a very hot subject on the site's forums. Canadians are asking why this exception to imported vehicles and we are not getting any worthwhile answers from your staff. The most popular hybrid vehicles are Prius and Camry. We are very concerned that Transport Canada would chose to exclude high fuel efficient vehicles because the are imported from the USA. The Prius that are sold in Canada are identical to the one sold in the USA and are manufactured in Japan. We also know that the hybrid Camry's are either made in Japan or United States and are sold equally on both sides of the border. The Registrar of Imported Vehicles (RIV) had these vehicles as admissible and there is no doubt that the estimated MPG or L/100KM is the same as its Canadian twin.

We have several of our CWB members who have been calling your offices in the last 4-6 weeks to determine the logic of this import exception. We have been seeking to understand under which legislative authority Transport Canada has chosen to exclude the imports from the ecoAuto program. I have personally left a phone message to Mrs Aline MacDougall and my call was never returned. Transport Canada officials answering the public's inquiries are not able to respond as to the purpose of the import exclusion. It is not in their communications script, we are told. I understand that Ekaterina Ohandjanian, Legal may be able to shed some light on this secrecy.

I am asking that you please personally intervene in this file to get some straight answers for the public. CarsWithoutBorders is seeking to understand the logic for the import exclusions and under which legislative

authority. We heard on the CBC news that TC said there was no easy way to ensure that the vehicle bought in the United States are really new. You certainly remember this CBC National program that aired December 15. <http://video.google.ca/videoplay?docid=-27764732540012684&hl=en-CA> .

We all know the cars are new, the various provincial governments that have similar programs have found ways to deal with this issue. Please intervene and straighten this out. CWB members are happy with the speed in which TC has passed the Immobilizer regulations in December and we would seek an equally speedy action on this ecoAuto program.

Yours Truly from concerned Canadians

Serge Bergeron
Co-Founder CarsWithoutBorders

c.c. Robert Lamb CWB