

It's time to end Drive Clean

By **DAVE HASSELL**

Special to the IFP

I've been a mechanic for 40 years and have been in the automobile business for 30.

And I'm sick of seeing people waste money on emission testing.

Ontario's Drive Clean program brings in \$30 million a year for the Provincial government. It began in 1999, and a year later, in 2000, the government claimed a 16 per cent failure rate of cars tested. Ten years later, in 2010, the government patted itself on the back claiming they had brought the failure rate down to 5 per cent.

Auditor-General Jim McCarter documented in his 2012 report, the failure rate improvements have little to do with testing results, but more to do with other factors:

- Major improvements in vehicle emission control systems at the manufacturing level.

- The oil companies are producing cleaner burning fuels.

- The ongoing retirement of old, inefficient vehicles.

Competition amongst vehicle manufacturers to produce a more fuel-efficient vehicle will, in itself, regulate future emissions quality.

As of January 1, 2013, the new emissions testing program took effect eliminating the dynamometer and the tailpipe exhaust analysis.

Strange how this new revised Ontario program was rushed into service at the same time the British Columbia provincial government concluded the emission program has run its course and will end it in 2014.

Ontario Progressive Conservative environment critic Michael Harris, accused the Province of changing the emission testing method to spike the number of failed tests to justify the continued need for the program.

It's obvious the government sees this program as a cash cow and is not about to let it go at your expense. The auto shops bear the full 100 per cent at their cost—all equipment, repairs, calibration and employees. For that they get \$20 a vehicle. The government gets an unencumbered \$19.55 with no cost to them at all.

The new method of testing is done with a scanner that plugs into the diagnostic terminal under the dash. The test is to make sure all monitors of the emissions control system are functional.

Several mechanics, including myself, question this method of testing because it doesn't necessarily relate to the emissions levels.



Dave Hassell, owner of Hassell Automotive Sales and Service says it's time Ontario scrapped the Drive Clean program.

Photo by Ted Brown

In other words, if your check engine light is on, you'll probably fail because one or more sensors of 10 to 15 are not functioning properly. The vehicle could be driving perfectly with no extra emissions output whatsoever. Many of us have driven for years with that silly little light on. Now the government wants it out.

There is one consolation. You can go to any quality auto shop that is equipped with a scanner and find out in two minutes or less if your car will pass before going to the test machine and spending the \$39.55.

It's a quick test to see if you need to be concerned and plan for any cost. Most shops probably won't charge for it.

As ridiculous as it may sound the Ministry of the Environment has suggested following these steps before taking the test.

Step 1: Make sure the vehicle has been parked for eight hours without a start.

Step 2: Start the engine and let it idle in drive for 2-1/2 minutes with the air-conditioning (A/C) and defroster on.

Step 3: Turn the A/C and rear defroster off. Drive the vehicle for 10 minutes at highway speeds.

Step 4: Drive the vehicle for 20 minutes in stop and go traffic.

Step 5: Your drive cycle is complete. You can now go in for your test.

After all that, you're supposed to be ready. It doesn't mean it will pass. It just means you're ready.

Save the gas and aggravation, go to your local shop and have it scanned.

If you'd like more support in ending this government money grab go to www.scrapdriveclean.ca.

There remains only one question I'd like to ask the Minister of the Environment. Where were you when we had the Chrysler Cordoba or the Ford Granada or the Oldsmobile Delta 88 and all the other polluting monstrosities?

That's when we really needed you!

—Dave Hassell is the owner of Hassell Automotive Sales and Service, 45 Mountainview Rd. N. in Georgetown



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Cost of borrowing is \$1,077.28 // \$1,829.20 // \$3,519.44 for a total finance obligation of \$16,016.28 // \$27,199.20 // \$27,334.44. \$0 // \$0 // \$0 down payment required based on approved credit from Honda Financial Services Inc. *Limited time 0.99% APR lease offers on a new 2013 Honda Fit DX (Model GE6G2DEX) // 2013 Honda Civic DX Sedan (Model FB2E2DEX) // 2013 Honda Accord LX Sedan 6MT (Model CR2E3DE) // 2013 Honda CR-V LX 2WD (Model RM3H3DES) for a maximum of 24 // 24 // 24 // 48 months available through Honda Financial Services Inc. on approved credit. Representative lease example: based on a 2013 Honda CR-V LX 2WD (Model RM3H3DES) on a 24 month term at 0.99% lease APR, the monthly payment is \$471.21 [includes \$1,640 freight and PDI, EHF tires (\$29), EHF filters (\$1), A/C tax (\$100), and OMVIC fee (\$5)] with \$0 down payment or equivalent trade-in, \$0 security deposit and first monthly payment due at lease inception. Total lease obligation is \$11,309.04. 48,000-kilometre allowance; charge of \$0.12/km for excess kilometres. *Receive 0.99% purchase financing on any new 2013 Honda Fit DX (Model GE6G2DEX) // 2013 Honda Civic DX Sedan (Model FB2E2DEX) // 2013 Honda Accord LX Sedan 6MT (Model CR2E3DE) // 2013 Honda CR-V LX 2WD (Model RM3H3DES) models for a maximum of 24 // 24 // 24 // 48 months available through Honda Financial Services Inc. on approved credit. Representative finance example: based on a 2013 Honda CR-V LX 2WD (Model RM3H3DES) on a 48 month term at 0.99% APR and complete price of \$27,765 [includes \$1,640 freight and PDI, EHF tires (\$29), EHF filters (\$1), A/C tax (\$100) and OMVIC fee (\$5). Excludes taxes, license, insurance, and registration), the monthly payment is \$590.20. Cost of borrowing is \$564.60 for a total finance obligation of \$28,329.60. Down payment or equivalent trade-in on purchase financing offers may be required based on approved credit from Honda Financial Services Inc. *Bi-weekly lease available on all 2013 Honda models on 48 and 60-month terms only. *\$4,000 // \$4,000 // \$3,000 // \$2,500 // \$2,000 // \$1,500 // \$500 customer cash incentive is valid on any new 2013 Honda Pilot // 2013 Honda Odyssey // 2013 Honda Ridgeline // 2013 Honda CR-V (except LX 2WD, model RM3H3DES) // 2013 Honda Crosstour // 2013 Honda Accord Coupe and Sedan (except LX Sedan 6MT, model CR2E3DE) // 2013 Civic Coupe and Sedan (except DX Sedan, model FB2E2DEX) // 2013 Honda Fit (except LX, model GE6G2DEX) models when registered and delivered between June 1 and July 1, 2013. Cash incentive is available for all Honda retail customers except customers who lease or finance through Honda Financial Services Inc. at a subvented rate of interest offered by Honda as part of a low rate interest program. All advertised lease and finance rates are special rates. Cash incentive will be deducted from the negotiated price before taxes. For all offers: license, insurance, PPSA, other taxes (including HST) and excess wear and tear are extra. Taxes payable on full amount of purchase price. Offers only valid for Ontario residents at Ontario Honda Dealers. Dealer may sell/lease for less. Dealer order/trade may be necessary. Vehicles and accessories are for illustration purposes only. Offers, prices and features subject to change without notice. See your Ontario Honda Dealer or visit HondaOntario.com for full details. **Based on Association of International Automobile Manufacturers for Canada (AIAMC) data reflective sales between 1997 and December 2012.