

Licence plate stickers on the way out-it?s about time!



MICHAEL RILEYStaff

THE NEWS BROKE RECENTLY that the Ontario government was getting rid of licence plate stickers and the accompanying cost of renewing them each year by the middle of March. Aside from the fact that I already renewed for the past two COVID-19 years plus this coming year for an eye-watering \$360, and was seriously out of pocket, I think this is great news. It was even better news when I found out I'd be getting a refund for part of that expenditure, \$120, by the end of March or sometime in April. In any given year since I've started driving and had a vehicle, this is an expense that has always been hard to find or at the very least annoying to find. To say I'm glad it's now gone would be an understatement. Premier Doug Ford made the announcement at a press conference and accompanying news release on Feb. 22. He said that the government was making life more affordable for nearly eight million Ontarians with this move, and that it would take effect March 13. This change applies to passenger vehicles, light duty trucks, motorcycles and mopeds. Furthermore, he said that anyone who had renewed their stickers retroactively to March, 2020 would also get a refund of their renewal fees, starting at the end of March and throughout April. To get a refund cheque, vehicle owners need to confirm that their address information is accurate at www.Ontario.ca/addresschange.ca by March 7, and pay any outstanding fees, fines or tolls. For more information and/or assistance, vehicle owners can contact Service Ontario at 1-888-333-0049. Licence plate renewals will still be required every year or two, at no cost to confirm that their automobile insurance is valid and pay any outstanding fines or tolls. As Ontario eliminates licence plate stickers, other jurisdictions have already done so, including Quebec, Saskatchewan, Northwest Territories, Manitoba and Alberta. Drivers Licence renewals are still required every five years, however, at a cost of \$90. Dakota Brasier, the senior communications advisor and press secretary to Ontario minister of transportation Caroline Mulroney, says that the move to eliminate licence plate sticker fees cuts costs for Ontario families as the cost of living goes up to make life more affordable for them. By getting rid of licence plate renewal fees, Brasier says that a family with two vehicles will save \$480 every time they go to renew their licence plates. At the end of the day, this is over a billion dollars in financial relief that is going back into people's pockets and back into our economy, where it belongs. We know the rising cost of living has made many things more expensive and can make it harder for families to make ends meet. After two years of the pandemic, people don't need anymore hurdles in the way of getting back on their feet and back to normal. That's why our government is taking real action to cut costs and give real help to people and families across Ontario, she says. So, it's welcome news that I won't have to wait in line every year to renew my sticker and even better that I'm saving \$120 in the process. Many people say this is an election gimmick from the Ford government to get re-elected in June, and wonder where the money lost to the government from ending the stickers will end up being recouped. I'm not saying I disagree with those sentiments. But it is still nice to be saving a not insignificant amount of cash every year, especially when the price of gas and other goods are rising so much after two years of COVID-19 and the current war raging between Russia and Ukraine. As a wise man once said, a penny saved is a penny

earned. Or in the case of Canada, since we no longer have pennies, a nickel saved is a nickel earned.