

ZEV Workshop Participant Primer

October 27, 2026 | RCC Retail Sustainability Conference

Workshop Context

The 2025 ZEV workshop brought together stakeholders from retail, CPG, logistics, utilities, government and the ZEV ecosystem to examine fleet electrification, fleet and consumer charging, vehicle considerations, policy and total cost of ownership. The 2026 workshop, developed in partnership with IKEA Canada and PowerON Energy Solutions, will again bring together retailers, shippers, logistics providers, utilities, policymakers, OEMs and infrastructure partners to focus on identifying practical opportunities for collaboration to advance the ZEV transition.

Current Canadian Landscape

Transport Canada's electric vehicle dashboard[i] shows that the adoption of MHDV EVs is accelerating in Canada but there is still significant space to grow.

- The ZEV MHDV market is growing, in Q1 2026 **2.7% of new MHDVs sold in Canada were electric**, up from 1.9% in 2025 and 0.2% in 2021.
- **ZEVs make up approximately 0.4% of the MHDV fleet** in Canada in Q1 2026. Canadian penetration of ZEV MDHVs is comparable to the EU[ii] where approximately 0.4% of the MDHV fleet were ZEV as of 2025, but lagging behind China[iii] where approximately 3% of the total MHDV fleet is ZEV.*
- Adoption varies across Canada, **Quebec leads the way with EV MHDVs representing 6.5% of new MHDV sales in Q1 2026**, followed by Ontario at 3.1% and BC at 2.9%.
- Dedicated MHDV charging infrastructure is emerging, with **339 government of Canada funded or financed MHDV chargers opened as of March 2026**, and 257 more planned.

These statistics show the MHDV ZEV adoption is increasing, and infrastructure development is continuing, but significant challenges and barriers still remain for fleets to transition.

At a Glance: Looking Back at the Last Year

Over the past year the funding and implementation landscape to support the MHDV fleet transition has continued to evolve, with:

- Federal Green Freight funding has closed[iv] and iMHZEV purchase incentives have ended[v]
- Provincial programs in Quebec[vi] and BC[vii], along with CIB infrastructure support[viii] remain

New industry collaborations have emerged with the launch of the PowerON MHDV Charging Infrastructure Corridor Working Group. The developments reinforce the need to look beyond funding and grant programs and explore how shared infrastructure, new financing models and coordinated investment can help fleets move from pilots toward scalable deployment.

Current Market Context

While ZEV deployment is growing, fleet electrification remains at an early stage for many organizations. RCC's 2026 engagement found that many fleets remain in the planning or pilot stage, with economics identified as the largest barrier to deployment and charging infrastructure as the strongest opportunity for collaboration. Utilities, property owners/landlords and governments remain important partners, while investment decisions are often tied to long-term vehicle replacement and capital cycles.

References:

- [i] Transport Canada, "Canada Electric Vehicle Dashboard - Private EV Chargers Selected for Funding or Financing," Government of Canada, <https://tc.canada.ca/en/road-transportation/innovative-technologies/electric-vehicles/canada-electric-vehicle-dashboard/private-ev-chargers-selected-for-funding-or-financing>
- [ii] Rabobank, "The Great Electrification of Transport: Unlocking Efficiency Gains," RaboResearch, <https://www.rabobank.com/knowledge/d011522122-the-great-electrification-of-transport-unlocking-efficiency-gains>
- [iii] International Energy Agency, Global EV Outlook 2026, "Electric Vehicle Charging," 2026, <https://www.iea.org/reports/global-ev-outlook-2026/electric-vehicle-charging-chap-6-and-10>
- [iv] Natural Resources Canada, "Green Freight Program," Government of Canada, 2026, <https://natural-resources.canada.ca/energy-efficiency/transportation-energy-efficiency/greening-freight/green-freight-program>
- [v] Transport Canada, "Medium- and Heavy-Duty Zero-Emission Vehicles: Q&A," Government of Canada, <https://tc.canada.ca/en/road-transportation/innovative-technologies/electric-vehicles/medium-heavy-duty-zero-emission-vehicles/questions-answers>
- [vi] Gouvernement du Québec, "À propos du programme Écocommionnage," <https://www.quebec.ca/transports/aide-financiere/electrification/ecocommionnage-la-propos-du-programme-ecocommionnage>
- [vii] Government of British Columbia, "Commercial Vehicle Rebates," Go Electric BC, <https://goelectricbc.gov.bc.ca/find-rebates/commercial-vehicles/>
- [viii] Canada Infrastructure Bank, "Charging and Hydrogen Refuelling Infrastructure Initiative," <https://cib-bic.ca/en/charging-and-hydrogen-refuelling-infrastructure-initiative/>

Focus of the 2026 Workshop

Building on the lessons from 2025, the 2026 workshop will focus on identifying collaborative actions that can help fleets move from pilots to scalable deployment and further the ZEV transition. Discussion will focus on:

- **Optimizing shared and private charging infrastructure** and improving access, utilization and planning for shared hubs, corridors and existing infrastructure and grid readiness.
- **Financing models and investment opportunities** to advance fleet and infrastructure investments in the absence of predictable funding.
- **Information sharing and organizational readiness** to identify the information, education needs, evidence and partner commitments needed to support investment and internal approvals.
- **Collaboration and risk reduction** by exploring how retailers, shippers, logistics providers, utilities and other stakeholders can work together to reduce investment risk and accelerate deployment.

The workshop will conclude by identifying actions that stakeholders can advance together over the next 12–24 months.