

Volt for Arnold

California governor promotes electric car with tax break

By LYN COCKBURN

Don't like Arnold Schwarzenegger. Haven't since 1990 when he starred in Kindergarten Cop.

I took a friend's seven-year-old to that flick only to watch a likable little boy turn into an agitated alien. So buzzed was he that his mother thought I'd fed him 14 chocolate bars, if not cocaine.

Not long after, Schwarzenegger announced he wouldn't take his own kids to the movie because it was too violent. I have loathed him during most of the following 18 years.

But after being elected governor of California in 2003, it took the man only two years to start wearing down my resolve.

It was in June of 2005 that he announced a sweeping plan to reduce California's emissions of greenhouse cases.

And then, last Monday, Arnold gave Tesla Motors a fat tax break so that it would not move the company to New Mexico. He said the idea that the company might go elsewhere drove him "absolutely insane."

Tesla Motors is an electric car company.

Arnold, now that I no longer hate you - may I call you Arnold? - you want insane, come to Canada.

Here, the electric car situation hovers between stupid and absurd.

See, the feds won't quite OK the use of the electric car on our roads (depending on which day of the week you talk to one of their minions) and on numerous occasions have announced that its use is OK, not OK or up to each individual province.

GATED COMMUNITIES

So far, not one province has made the electric car entirely legal -- except maybe in gated communities.

For example, several people in B.C. have bought electric cars from the States, because they had been told it was OK (that was on a Wednesday, I believe) only to find out that their brand new vehicle could not be insured.

Moreover, Arnold, we manufacture electric cars. Right here in Canada. In Quebec, as a matter of fact. It's called the Zenn car and you probably are aware of it since right now it is sold in 45 of your 50 states.

That's right. In these days of unbelievably high gas prices, Canada can manufacture the electric car, but we can't sell it here. Sort of.

Thankfully, the government of Quebec a pris une decision to launch a provincewide, three-year pilot project that enables low-speed vehicles (LSVs) in the province.

Hopefully, this means the rest of Canada will get off its collective derriere and allow, nay, promote the sale of no-emission no-gas electric cars.

Granted, the Zenn car or any other electric vehicles manufactured in Canada, such as the Dynasty, cannot reach the speed, price (the Zenn may sell at around \$15,000) and endurance of your Tesla, but if the feds and the provincial governments get together I'm sure we can do something about that.

We've got this soon-to-be-empty automotive plant in Oshawa you may have heard about.

I gather the five-passenger Tesla goes for about \$60,000 and can last for 360 km before it needs to be charged up.

And I also hear you've ordered the \$109,000 Tesla sports model which tops out at 200 kmh.

Good on ya, Arnold. I have to tell you though -- I've never really liked any of your movies.

