

Charging up in Chandler, QC at their waterfront 50 kW charging station.
Photo courtesy of Mary-Frances Lynch.

Continued from page 6

One of our biggest discoveries was a practical one made at our last charging stop in Shediac, New Brunswick. A fellow EV driver shared that Québec's Circuit électrique app has partnerships with 19 charging networks, including those in New Brunswick and many in Nova Scotia, allowing you to pay with that app at those chargers. This tip was invaluable since the myriad of payment methods, apps and account signups for each charger was one of the more tedious parts of the trip. For our next long journey, we'll exclusively use the Circuit électrique app for consistent payment and tracking.

What surprised me most was just how well-suited EV travel is to the family road trip. With young kids, you need to stop often for washroom-, snack- and stretch-breaks, and so a travel pace slowed by charging stops goes unnoticed. From our experience, we savoured the stops. Over our week-long holiday, we made 13 charging stops, totaling 6 and a half hours of charging time (when car was plugged in). Enjoying a buffet breakfast in Eel River Bar First Nation (NB), climbing into a giant coffee cup in Chandler (QC), and playing soccer in Bouctouche (NB) left us with memories of new places that we would not have visited without needing to stop and charge.

For our family, we are sold on long-distance EV travel. It's not that hard of a sell. The trip is totally doable and made smoother with some advance planning to map out stops. A co-navigator to look up charging stations for inevitable spontaneous stops to accommodate younger travellers is helpful too. Slower chargers are cost effective and work well for longer mealtime or overnight stops, and simply charging up regularly, no matter how short, reduces range anxiety.

In addition to the 187 Canadian flags spotted on our journey, we saw just how reliable EV charging infrastructure is in this part of the region (especially in Québec), and with millions of dollars of planned investment in EV chargers in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, the journey will be even more seamless in coming years. My advice to families considering taking that longer trip in an EV in at least our part of Atlantic Canada – drive, charge and discover.

Climate Stories Atlantic is an initiative of Climate Focus, a non-profit organization dedicated to covering stories about community-driven climate solutions.

IESO Nova Scotia Receives Federal Decisions

IESO Nova Scotia has received decisions from the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada today that determined the two 300 megawatt fast-acting generation facilities proposed for Marshdale and Salt Springs do not require additional federal assessment. With these decisions, the Impact Assessment Agency indicates that it finds existing federal and provincial legislative and regulatory frameworks to be sufficiently robust to address any potential effects of the facilities that fall within federal jurisdiction.

"With growing electricity demand, our ongoing transition to renewable energy, and peak events including extreme weather putting severe stress on the system, Nova Scotia urgently needs new firm generation capacity to maintain energy supply reliability," said Chris Milligan, Vice President of Planning and Procurement for IESO Nova Scotia. "This decision reinforces the importance of the many conditions and requirements IESO Nova Scotia is already working to meet through the provincial assessment process — including stringent environmental regulations, extensive permitting processes, and continued engagement with Pictou County residents, Mi'kmaw communities and organizations, municipal officials, and other interested stakeholders — as we work to develop this urgently needed generation capacity for the province."

As Nova Scotia phases out coal and significantly ramps up renewable generation, a significant portion of the province's electricity will come from variable sources like wind, which isn't constant.

To ensure there is a secure supply of electricity for homes, schools, hospitals, and businesses when renewables aren't enough to meet demand, such as during a cold snap when the wind isn't blowing, Nova Scotia needs fast-acting generation to provide backup power to the system. These facilities are designed to ramp up quickly when they are needed and power down when they're not, and to have a pathway to future operation without the use of fossil fuels.

IESO Nova Scotia is also required to obtain numerous permits through Nova Scotia Environment and Climate Change, such as Industrial Plant / Facilities Approvals, Dangerous Goods Approvals, and Filings of Approved Contingency Plans, and to comply with the many conditions associated with its Environmental Assessment approvals (25 conditions for Salt Springs and 26 conditions for Marshdale).

In October 2025, IESO Nova Scotia issued a Request for Expressions of Interest for the construction and operation of one or two 300 megawatt fast-acting natural gas-fired facilities in Pictou County, with numerous parties indicating interest in participating in the competitive procurement process.

IESO Nova Scotia is conducting a comprehensive evaluation to determine if one, or both, of the proposed sites are suitable to support the project, considering environmental, technical, financial, cultural, and community impacts. The results of this analysis and the competitive procurement process will inform whether one, two, or no contracts are awarded.

This is part of a comprehensive energy resource portfolio that includes significantly expanded energy storage, imported energy, energy efficiency and demand response programs, and continued additions of renewable generation. IESO Nova Scotia is responsible for competitively procuring these critical resources to meet the province's needs at the best possible cost for electricity customers.

IESO Nova Scotia is a not-for-profit created by provincial law to take on electricity system planning and real-time grid operations on behalf of Nova Scotians. IESO Nova Scotia will be responsible for planning for the province's future energy needs, procuring new electricity generation capacity, and purchasing and dispatching power from producers, including Nova Scotia Power. IESO Nova Scotia is independent of governments, utilities, and power producers, meaning decisions will be driven only by Nova Scotians' needs.

With a mandate to bring transparency and competition to the province's electricity market, IESO Nova Scotia's singular focus is to improve reliability, accelerate the transition to renewable energy, and secure the most cost-effective electricity possible for Nova Scotians. IESO Nova Scotia began operations in 2025.




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