



Doug Ford's van skewered as a 'pimped-out ride' and 'Taj Mahal on wheels'



Ford's executive assistant used personal email for van estimate, court documents show

Lisa Xing · CBC News · Posted: Feb 26, 2019 5:47 PM ET | Last Updated: February 26



Premier Doug Ford's chief of staff commissioned a 'camper-style' van modified to the Ford's specifications, says Ontario Provincial Police Deputy Commissioner Brad Blair. (CBC)

Opposition leaders are slamming Doug Ford and his government over details of the camper van the premier wanted customized to his specifications.

While Ford did not attend question period Tuesday, the New Democrats did not hold back.

"The vehicle the premier asked for sounds like the Taj Mahal on wheels," said Taras Natyshak, the NDP MPP for Essex.

"When the premier said that he wanted to stop the gravy train, it's clearly because he needed time to get on board."

- **Doug Ford's van customization has \$50K price tag, documents show**

Community Safety and Correctional Services Minister Sylvia Jones fielded the questions, maintaining Ford's request for a used van was to make sure he could travel the province without incurring expenses of a flight.

"[It's] a perfectly reasonable use of resources," said Jones.

The retrofitting would have cost taxpayers more than \$50,000 and would have included:

- A mini-fridge.
- A 32-inch television with Blu-ray player.
- A leather power reclining sofa bench.
- Four swivel chairs and desks.

"No premier needs to have that kind of pimped-out ride for his work," said NDP leader Andrea Horwath.

“No premier needs to have that kind of pimped-out ride.”

- NDP leader Andrea Horwath

Details of the customization and cost estimate were included in a document filed in Ontario Superior Court by lawyers representing Ontario Provincial Police Deputy Commissioner Brad Blair.





OPP Deputy Commissioner Brad Blair's lawyers submitted a document outlining the request for the customization and the cost estimate for the camper van to Ontario Superior Court. (Ontario Provincial Police)

Blair is [asking the court to force Ontario's ombudsman](#) to investigate the hiring of Ford's family friend, Toronto Police Service Supt. Ron Taverner, as OPP commissioner.

Personal email

Interim Liberal Leader John Fraser expressed concern about the way Ford's staff got an estimate for the van.

The court documents show Ford's executive assistant Nico Fidani used his personal email address to communicate with members of the OPP and a company called A1 Mobility.

"The most important thing is they tried to conceal it," said Fraser. "That's what people should be concerned about."

The Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario states online it "recommends" leaders of public institutions "strictly control" their staff and forbid the use of personal email accounts for doing government business, unless they can be set up to make sure those records are saved.

Ford's office did not respond to questions Tuesday about why Fidani used his personal email.

The premier's office maintains any accusations it wanted the van to be kept off the books are false.

"The emails sent to the OPP from a member of the premier's office staff are not an official procurement of a van, instead they are a cost-estimate and reveal an effort to minimize expense," Ford's director of media relations, Simon Jefferies, said on Monday.

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