

About 3.4 million Albertans will receive \$100 energy rebate from provincial government

People with household income \$225,000 or less are eligible for the tax-free cash

Michelle Bellefontaine · CBC News · Posted: Jun 17, 2026



Premier Danielle Smith announces the new Alberta Energy Rebate at a news conference in Calgary on Wednesday. (CBC)

Twenty years after then-premier Ralph Klein gave every Albertan a \$400 cheque, the current Alberta government is giving each eligible resident a one-time payment of \$100.

Premier Danielle Smith announced Wednesday that Albertans with combined household incomes of \$225,000 or less and who filed a 2025 tax return are eligible to apply for the new \$100 Alberta Energy Rebate.

Applications open on July 1, according to a Wednesday news release from the government.

Smith said the rebate replaces the fuel tax relief program that put a pause on all or part of the provincial tax portion of gasoline and diesel when oil prices were high. The rebate will be accessible to all eligible Albertans, whether they drive or not.



"The minister of finance took a look at these options, and we collectively decided that it would be better to do the rebate of these dollars, give more dollars to those who need it the most, and make sure that they're able to use it according to their needs," Smith said.

The government estimates that about 3.4 million Albertans will get the payment. The news release said the rebate is not taxable.

Alberta Premier Danielle Smith announced a \$100 oil surplus rebate payment for millions of Albertans to help with the cost of living, but critics call the amount too little to make any real financial difference.

Finance Minister Jason Nixon said about 70 per cent of Albertans will be eligible for the payment. He said giving people money ensures they get relief instead of relying on gas stations to reduce the price per litre.

Alberta's treasury has benefitted from high oil prices caused by the war between the United States and Israel and Iran.

The conflict, which started Feb. 28, prompted Iran to close the Strait of Hormuz, a key route for oil tankers delivering supplies to the rest of the world. Oil prices rose in response.

The price of a barrel of West Texas Intermediate oil, the benchmark used by the Alberta government, rose as high as \$104 on May 19.

U.S. President Donald Trump announced this week that the strait will reopen under terms of an agreement reached with Iran.

'Ralph Bucks' comparison

Smith's rebate is inviting comparisons to former premier Klein's decision to give every Albertan \$400 in 2006.

The so-called "Ralph Bucks" rebate program cost the government \$1.4 billion at a time when the government was sitting on a multi-billion surplus.

The government's financial position is much different today. Former finance minister Nate Horner forecasted a \$9.4 billion deficit for the 2026-27 fiscal year in his February budget.

Brendan Boyd, an associate professor in political science at MacEwan University in Edmonton, said the current government's plan could prove to be dangerous.

"The big difference I would point to is that we're not in as financially a strong position as we were in 2006 to do something like this," Boyd said.



"And then of course, even in 2006, it was two years later that the global financial crisis happened and oil prices went down again."

Boyd said the government could also run into political problems if the public perceives the rebate as too small.

"You open yourself up to the criticism of, well, this isn't going to make any difference, right?" he said.

"People will notice \$1,000," he said.

But they might not favourably notice the \$100 payment, he added. "People, I think, will say 'This makes a difference?'"

Not enough for a week of groceries

Some people CBC talked to in downtown Edmonton said they were underwhelmed by the rebate.

"I don't even think it would cover a week of groceries, in my opinion, especially for someone living in a multi-person household," Zoey Johnson said. "I would say it's bare minimum, but it's nice that they're doing something, I guess."

Ravneet Ahluwalia said the rebate was like putting a bandage on a big problem. "How much the expenses have gone up, that \$100 doesn't compensate, to be honest," he said.

One Edmontonian said the \$100 could make a difference to those with lower incomes. "One hundred dollars could be the difference between getting necessities in life," said Karim Broodhagen. "I would have thought they could do a little bit more."

Alberta NDP Leader Naheed Nenshi accused Smith of introducing the rebate to change the channel on her latest low poll numbers.

"This is clearly a program that they wrote on the back of an envelope. They probably worked on it for about 24 hours," he said.

"Yes, Albertans need more money in their pockets. But a hastily crafted policy by a government that spent the last year saying there's no crisis doesn't fill me with confidence that it's going to work."

According to Trevor Tombe, an economist at the University of Calgary, the rebate matches the average price shock people are seeing at the gas pumps. He estimates gas prices increased by 40 per cent over the last four months.



The \$100 rebates will land much differently than the \$400 payments from 2006, Tombe said, adding that the latter were not framed as an affordability measure and people largely spent the money on electronics and recreational activities.

"These are not dollars that people are going to be, for the most part, using to go out and buy discretionary items," he said.

"This is, really, much more about cushioning the blow from high energy prices."