

# Putting Electric Vehicle Users In Charge of Their Destiny



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Despite the disruption caused by COVID-19, electric commercial vehicles continue to move ahead in a big way. As a recent [Forbes article](#) noted, “electric trucks are entering the mainstream of American life faster than passenger vehicles like Tesla.”

Part of the reason is the heavy usage trucks and buses receive, which spreads their cost over a larger number of miles traveled, making them more cost-effective than electric cars. Another reason is the ongoing reduction in the cost of electric vehicle technology, primarily batteries. Jim Meil, an ACT research analyst cited in the *Forbes* article,

estimates that the payback period for electric school buses will drop from less than four years in 2025 to just over a year by 2030.

However, unlike electric car owners, the truck and bus fleets converting to electric need more than just a place to charge a vehicle between uses. This was made abundantly clear during 18 months of consultative work that Navistar’s IC Bus unit conducted with a group of school districts in British Columbia, where the government has mandated a 40 percent greenhouse gas reduction for public fleets by 2030.

Our discussions with the transportation supervisors for these school districts demonstrated that their needs extended far beyond our traditional strengths of constructing the vehicle itself. Customers also need three other “Cs”: consulting to help address their specific needs, guidance on charging infrastructure, and help in connecting the charging platform with a fleet portal that can track vehicles’ electricity usage, state of charge, and available range.

Last fall, our recognition of these customer needs led Navistar to establish a special business unit, NEXT eMobility Solutions, which handles all these “four Cs” aspects of electrification.

We were recently excited to announce that NEXT is partnering with In-Charge Energy, an energy solutions company that worked closely with us in British Columbia. This new partnership with In-Charge builds even further on our strong capabilities in these “four Cs” areas. We’ll also be harnessing all available government incentives and grants to provide customers with the best return on investment.

This partnership makes International Truck, and Navistar’s school bus brand, IC Bus, the first OEM to offer end-to-end turnkey solutions in this area. But what’s ultimately most powerful is the benefit to customers.

This was borne out when those school districts in British Columbia recently ordered 18 type C electric school buses to be provided by IC Bus. In-Charge will be delivering site planning services that will support the school districts’ charging solution. This order, which was funded through the annual British Columbia Provincial School Bus Standing Offer, is one of the largest single electric school bus orders ever placed from a single province in Canada.

When customers have a partner that can advise them on every facet of electrification, their deployment of electric vehicles is much more likely to happen soon – and to succeed over the long run.