

FONOM

The Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities

March 21, 2014

Honourable Glen Murray
Minister of Transportation
Ferguson Block, 3rd Floor
77 Wellesley Street West
Toronto, ON M7A 1Z8

Honourable Deb Matthews
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
Hepburn Block, 10th Floor
80 Grosvenor Street
Toronto, ON M7A 2C4

Hon. Michael Chan
Minister of Tourism, Culture & Sport
Hearst Block, 9th Floor
900 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M7A 2E1

Dear Ministers:

Re: Private Member's Bill 79 – Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Amendment Act, 2013

The Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM) wishes to express its support for the above mentioned bill as it would enhance public safety for all highway users, expand tourism opportunities and support good health.

The bill, if passed, would require the Minister of Transportation to construct paved shoulders on prescribed portions of the King's Highways when there is a significant undertaking to repave or resurface that portion.

FONOM recognizes the efforts of the Province to acknowledge the benefits of paved shoulders and the attention that it has shown on particular highways. Moving forward, it is important that the Province streamline this approach across the province.

Increasing the amount of paved shoulders would enhance public safety for both cyclists as well as vehicles. Research has shown that a road with paved shoulders results in fewer car accidents and improved relationships between motorized and non-motorized road users. Although it is estimated to cost significantly more to pave each kilometre of paved shoulder, it is argued that that in the long run, the costs would be mitigated by the reduced cost of maintenance for gravel shoulders as paved shoulders last an average of five years longer and require less maintenance.

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Improving public transportation on provincial highways would also benefit the tourism industry in Ontario, more specifically, cycling tourism, which is currently one of the fastest growing tourism sectors in Ontario. Research demonstrates that the average cycling visitor stayed longer within the region than a non-cycling visitor. Furthermore, having paved shoulders would connect northern Ontario with southern Ontario and greatly improve partnerships province wide through the integration of related cycling projects and activities.

Furthermore, ensuring that shoulders are paved when there is a significant undertaking to repave or resurface the highways will benefit the health of Ontarians. Safe cycling routes and paved shoulders will assist in building healthy, happy, and environmentally friendly communities. It will help individuals to make green commuting choices, provide affordable holiday options for local families and individuals and will work towards connecting a variety of cycling infrastructure efforts.

Support for this initiative has been demonstrated by a variety of stakeholders, including municipalities such as the Town of Parry Sound, cycling organizations such as the Manitoulin Island Cycling Advocates (MICA), non-profit organizations such as the Ontario Good Roads Association (OGRA), and health organizations such as the Sudbury & District Health Centre.

CycleOn which is Ontario's cycling strategy paper by the Ministry of Transportation was developed to provide viable mobility choices to Ontarians and to maximize the public health, environmental and economic benefits of cycling. This strategy is consistent with the broad objectives of provincial infrastructure/land use policies such as the Provincial Policy Statement and the Growth Plan for Northern Ontario. Therefore, support for this Bill is highly validated and serves to benefit both residents as well as the Province's long-term goals.

FONOM would be pleased to provide more information if needed.

Sincerely,



Alan Spacek
President