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May 16, 2014

The Honourable Lisa Raitt, M.P.

Minister of Transport  
Transport Canada  
Place de Ville, Tower C, 29th Floor  
330 Sparks Street, Mail Stop: XA  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0N5

Dear Minister Raitt:

Re: Truck Sideguards and Dedicated Cycling Paths

Thank you for your email of November 29, 2013 in response to our letter of February 2, 2013 in support of Bill C-344, which would make a significant contribution to road safety and fuel efficiency by requiring trucks operating on Canada's roads to be equipped with sideguards.

We applaud and strongly support Canada's vision of having "the safest roads in the world". In light of this, we are particularly disappointed with your response, especially due to the recent deaths of a 25-year-old woman in Toronto and of a 20 year old woman in Surrey, BC, both of whom were killed by trucks turning at intersections. We hope that you reconsider the Government's position on truck sideguard legislation.

Your letter states:

"However, the European studies did not consider if other factors, such as improved road design and increased use of dedicated pedestrian and cyclist paths, could explain the decline."

We strongly agree with you that bicycle paths and lanes separated from traffic are critical for the safety and comfort of cyclists. If the Federal Government is unwilling to mandate side guards because they are unconvinced of their effectiveness, that strongly supports the generally accepted conclusion that improved road design and increased use of dedicated pedestrian and cyclist paths will lead to improved safety. Additional benefits from this strategy are reduced costs for the health system (from better health and fitness) and for road infrastructure and maintenance (from reduced driving which also cuts congestion). Therefore, it appears to be a win-win strategy for the Federal Government to commit resources to implement improved road designs and build dedicated pedestrian and cyclist paths.

Though the federal government does fund many cycling paths throughout the country, we are concerned that in some federally funded road projects, cycling and pedestrian facilities have not been included or have left much to be desired. We provide the following examples:

- Federal funds were provided to "improve" Pipeline Road in Stanley Park, Vancouver, however cycling safety was diminished as a result of the project.
- We are concerned with the design of the Low Level Road project in North Vancouver which is in

the process of being rebuilt to facilitate port access. Unfortunately, a huge opportunity to provide a key link in the Spirit Trail - a flat direct walking and cycling path along the North Shore of Burrard Inlet which is designed for walkers and cyclists of all ages and abilities - was missed and the road will only be suitable for the small number of experienced cyclists who feel comfortable cycling next to truck traffic without separation. Instead, walkers and families wanting to cycle with their children will be sent on a much longer route up a steep hill and through a forest that some will not feel safe using in the dark. Note also that no provision was made for pedestrians, which means that walking access to this Port of Vancouver location is impossible.

- In Ontario the Lake Huron Shoreline Cycle Corridor was funded through an Infrastructure Canada grant, yet Bruce County, chose NOT to use the \$75,000.00 budgeted for signage and directed those funds to other non-cycling projects. The county widened the road for a supposed "bike lane" but in effect gave drivers -- including large trucks -- permission to drive even faster on a wider road with not one hint to them through signage, sharrows or decreased speed limits that cyclists and pedestrians share the route. This is particularly dangerous for the Saugeen First Nation children, on whose land the route runs for several kilometres. They want to ride their bikes to school, but would be sharing the "cycle corridor" with fast moving and large vehicles.

Currently we have no way of regulating municipalities that receive funding for Active Transportation projects so there is a guarantee they actually create Active Transportation that meets a minimum standard of safety and use.

In conclusion, we continue to recommend that the federal government legislate sideguards on trucks to improve the safety of pedestrians and cyclists. In addition, there is an increased urgency to provide safe and convenient cycling infrastructure which is suitable for All Ages and Abilities (AAA). The federal government could lead the way by committing to provide funding only for road projects which are designed as "complete streets". The safety of pedestrians and cyclists of all ages and abilities and the provision of high quality cycling and walking paths should be uppermost in terms of funding. If Canada is going to realize its vision of having the safest roads in the world, it will have to ambitiously adopt all measures to improve safety and reduce fatalities, including sideguards on trucks and separated cycle paths.

We will follow up with more recommendations on making cycling safer and more comfortable for people of all ages and abilities. Canada Bikes looks forward to working with you to help make Canada's roads the safest in the world for cycling and walking.

Sincerely,

Arne Elias PhD

Chair, Canada Bikes

Arno Schortinghuis

Chair, Safety Committee

For the Board of Canada Bikes