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November 10, 2006

Ms Linda Stewart
Executive Director
Association of Local Public Health Agencies
425 University Avenue, Suite 502
Toronto, Ontario
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Dear Ms Stewart:

Thank you for your letter regarding resolutions for amending the Highway Traffic Act and the Off Road Vehicles Act (ORVA), forwarded to the Honourable Donna Cansfield, Minister of Transportation on September 18, 2006. I appreciate the opportunity to respond.

Driver and vehicle safety is a priority for the Ministry of Transportation (MTO). I am pleased to respond to your resolution calling for a tightening of the seat belt laws so that no passenger can travel unbelted. On October 16, 2006, this government introduced Bill 148, the Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Seat Belts) 2006. This bill has moved quickly, receiving Royal Assent on November 2, 2006. This legislation requires everyone in a motor vehicle to buckle up properly and will take effect upon proclamation, a process that includes approval from the Lieutenant Governor. We expect this law to take effect by early December 2006.

The Ministry is finalizing regulations that support this Bill, which will provide clarity on specific exemptions, requirements for passengers aged 16 and older to self-identify to police and demerit point penalties for drivers.

The ministry is also reviewing the legislation and policies related to the Off-Road Vehicles Act (ORVA). As part of this review, we have put in place a multi-stakeholder ATV working group to develop a comprehensive approach to promote ATV safety and prevent ATV injuries. The working group includes manufacturers, user associations, enforcement agencies, municipalities, health and safety advocates, and other ministries. They are examining the minimum age for off-road vehicle operators, and reviewing education and driver programs for riders. The next meeting of the ATV working group will be held this Fall.

Thank you for taking the time to write and express your concerns.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Harbottle". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Paul Harbottle
Director

<http://www.mto.gov.on.ca>