

Special Committee for Traffic Safety

My name is Ray Orb and I live in Cupar Saskatchewan.

First of all I would like to say that I think the creation of this legislated committee is a great idea since a discussion on traffic safety is somewhat overdue. I hope the recommendations from the committee to the province will make a difference and I hope I can contribute as well by being here today.

I am a grain farmer in the Cupar area which is 80 kms NE of Regina. I was born and raised and lived in the area for most of my life.

When I was 18 I was accepted into the University of Saskatchewan to be enrolled into the College of Agriculture. Around that same time I was a passenger in a vehicle that was rear-ended by another vehicle. The driver of the other car was never charged since he left the scene of the accident. The injuries I sustained were severe and the accident did change my life.

Although I missed attending university, I believe I am extremely fortunate to be here today to tell my story.

I have served on municipal council as both a councilor and reeve with the Rural Municipality of Cupar no. 218 for 26 years. Over that time I have witnessed many changes as the province's economy moved ahead of the rest of the country. Many of our children have moved home and more importantly others have decided to remain here. In light of this something else has happened; increased economic activity and increased road traffic.

My municipality contains several valuable natural resources beyond the farmland that produces a variety of grains and livestock; we have known reserves of potash and natural gas. We also possess reserves of aggregate, sand and gravel, which are in high demand and are destined mostly for the City of Regina.

In 2011 we had so much truck traffic that we couldn't keep up with road repairs and maintenance. Due to the large volume and speed of truck traffic we contacted the Highway Traffic Board but were told they didn't have the staff to help us and that rural roads were not a priority for them.

The local RCMP detachment apologized that they couldn't help for the same reasons.

Due to our local concerns with the increased truck traffic affecting road safety, this year we hired a Bylaw Enforcement officer to at least have someone to report to us and to work in collaboration with the RCMP.

Our goal is to someday be able to upgrade the BEO to the status of a Special Constable and to be able to enforce Traffic Act regulations.

Some municipalities like ours are discussing hiring their own RCMP officers to serve on a regional basis. There is no doubt that we need more police in the areas that are experiencing increased economic activity.

However, we cannot afford them on our own so they must be cost-shared with the province.

We also believe that rms should be able to acquire some the revenue that is ~~collected~~^{GENERATED} from fines, the same as some of our urban counterparts.

Highway traffic speed seems to be ever increasing wherever you go; motorists don't seem to slow down in spite of warnings and increased fines. Seeing drivers on cell phones is still commonplace in spite of the provincial wide ban.

While more police officers are needed, perhaps more effective driver education should also be mandatory. It seems there are still drivers who don't drive according to weather conditions, especially in the winter months. On several occasions I have seen motorists out of control on icy roads and many that ended up in the ditch simply because they wouldn't slow down.

Other drivers still are ignoring the Orange Zone signs. This spring there were two bridges that were repaired on the #6 Hwy north of the Regina. It was after the projects were completed on two separate occasions that I witnessed drivers passing others that were slowing down for the 60 km signs. Ignoring these signs is very dangerous as oncoming drivers aren't expecting this to happen.

I am pleased to hear that the Ministry of Highways is in the process of installing passing lanes on the #10 Hwy from Balgonie to Yorkton since this is an extremely busy highway. I heard mention of passing lanes for the #6 south of Regina and think this would also be a wise decision.

Even though the province is spending record amounts on our highways we cannot forget that we have more vehicle traffic than ever before.

Another problem is the speed that many of the large semis are travelling and the fact that some seem to follow too close to passenger vehicles.

Although both the Canadian and American Trucking Associations are trying to reduce truck stopping distances, the sheer size and weight of an 80,000 lb truck doesn't allow it to stop as quickly as a 2900 lb car travelling at the same speed.

Recommendations:

- More RCMP officers both dedicated to highways and areas of increased economic activity.
- Develop a new Fine Revenue Sharing model for rural municipalities.
- Increase the presence of Highway Traffic Enforcement officers.
- More effective driver education especially relating to driving under adverse weather conditions. (This should apply to all drivers).
- Better monitoring of Orange Zones with a combination of increased police and traffic camera presence.
- More passing lanes on busy two lane highways.

In closing I would like to thank the committee for listening to my concerns and for taking my recommendations into consideration.

Ray Orb

Reeve RM of Cupar

Box 220 Cupar, Sask

S0G0Y0

Home: 306-723-4344

Cell: 306-536-2778