

Burianyk, Kathy LEG

From: Kathy B [REDACTED]
Sent: May-20-13 4:05 PM
To: Committees LEG
Subject: Submission - Traffic Safety Special Committee
Attachments: Submission to Traffic Safety Committee.doc; Bellamy letter to Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure - Aug 2012.doc; Ministry reply Sep 2012 - pg1.pdf; Ministry reply Sep 2012 - pg2.pdf; Ministry reply Sep 2012 - pg3.pdf

Good afternoon,

My submission to the Special Committee on Traffic Safety is attached. It is really third in a series of documents, after my initial letter to the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure in August of 2012 and then their reply of September 2012. All documents in the series form a part of this submission and are all attached for your review.

Thank-you.
Kathy Bellamy
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[REDACTED]

May 19, 2013

Special Committee on Traffic Safety
Province of Saskatchewan

Dear Committee Members,

I have debated for some time a civilized response to Minister McMorris' letter of September 7, 2012 but perhaps there is none to be written.

I trust this committee to really listen to residents of the communities travelling the Trans Canada East highway *every day*. You do not have to conduct a study or hire consultants to recognize the problems. We are reasonable yet frustrated by the continued rhetoric from the Ministry.

To say that the intersections and speed are appropriate along the corridor east of Regina is laughable. I conducted an informal three week survey in September 2012 after the minister's reply and discovered I was not misunderstanding the drive. If I was the first in a line of traffic leaving the city, and strictly drove the speed limit, every car behind me passed me before I reached the Pilot Butte intersection. *Every car*. If drivers obeyed the rules of the road, maybe the minister's reply would ring true but the violations continue and without any enforcement there will be more accidents and likely deaths - despite everything reported in the studies and by the consultants.

I ask again for traffic signals to be installed at the 'rural' intersection near the Emerald Park Esso. According to the Ministry, 'signals could potentially jeopardize safety'. How is it that Alberta makes it work near Dunmore AB, just east of Medicine Hat? How is it that Albertans accept the lowered speed limit as you approach Medicine Hat? They must be terribly *frustrated* – please see the Minister's letter, page 2.

I would have thought the Ministry would be all over some of my August 2012 suggestions simply because they do not require a budget of millions. Small improvements would make a big difference – or does the Ministry need a consultant to say so. I am insulted that 'there may be a need to improve signing' – see the minister's response, page 2. Are you kidding me? There continue to be no signs **anywhere** marking the many acceleration lanes. One of the lanes has been present for more than 15 years and we can't get one sign! The businesses accessible from an east-bound off ramp still have no signage indicating services are available – and soon two new hotels will join the already considerable list. So rather than have traffic leave the highway via an off-ramp, vehicles exit at the already dangerous Emerald Park Esso intersection. Am I asking for an interchange? No. I've given up on that, but can you pound a sign or two into the ground please?

I again request the removal of the radar feedback signs near the Pilot Butte intersection and at the intersection of the #1 and #46 near Balgonie. The only drivers that slow down noticeably near the signs are folks from out of province who must think they're linked to radar somehow. They are distractions of the worst kind and at the very most dangerous intersections.

In August I suggested a lower speed limit would improve safety. The Minister's response to my letter said speed control is the responsibility of the RCMP. The much quoted Transportation Association of Canada guidelines indicate speed should be jointly discussed by all parties. The Minister's letter also says photo radar is the responsibility of the RCMP. Safety is the goal and we all know the government of Saskatchewan can improve safety through the use of photo radar. Please refer to the changes in our laws as traffic moves through construction zones this summer.

I would encourage this committee to recommend other construction zone changes. Contractors should be fined if signs remain in place when there is no hazard and no workers present. Drivers should be able to count on signage being present when there is a need to slow down and not be faced with the dilemma of wondering why we're slowing down when no construction workers are on-site.

Weather conditions and road conditions this winter illustrated the necessity for day-time running lights to be mandatory on all vehicles. Vehicles are more visible with their lights on, even in the day-time – I would ask the committee to consider changes to our traffic laws.

My informal September survey noted a complete disregard for the posted speed limit. As I monitored the behaviour of drivers related to speed, I also noted simple driving infractions. Like changing lanes in an intersection, failing to stop, failing to yield, driving distracted, speeding past emergency workers, etc. Were these dozens of infractions deliberate? Who knows, but I can't help but hope that an education campaign would improve our driving.

I encourage this committee to be bold. To make recommendations that might not be popular, but that might save lives. To believe that consultants don't always get it right. To listen to the regular public that without intending has conducted longitudinal studies over many days and years of driving Saskatchewan highways. To be our voice when the Ministry would rather we were silent.

With thanks for your efforts and best regards,

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August 21, 2012

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Hon. Brad Wall, Premier
Hon. Andrew Scheer, MP Regina-Qu'Appelle
Hon. Christine Tell, MLA Regina Wascana Plains
Hon. Don McMorris, MLA Indian Head-Milestone
Mr. Don Toth, MLA Moosomin
Mr. Bob Bjornerud, MLA Melville-Saltcoats
Ms. Laura Ross, MLA Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Bruce Evans, Mayor of White City
Michelle Lechner, mother of the late Michael Lechner
Barb Pacholik, Leader-Post
Tom Vernon, Global News

Dear Everybody:

Saskatchewan's prosperity and economic growth over the last five years has been truly remarkable. While travelling just 20 km east of Regina on the Trans Canada Highway (#1), more than 28 new businesses or expansions have been completed or are underway. Hundreds of new homes have been built with dozens more under construction. This new everything is fantastic, and deadly – and there is no more time to wait for Ministry studies, reviews, consultations and talk. *It is time to act.* Though nothing can immediately change the volume of traffic along this corridor, nearly every other issue can be resolved with simple, straightforward action – and *without* one overpass.

Issue #1. Speed

The speed limit increase to 110 km/h several years ago was a mistake. With the increased volume and variety of traffic on the roadway, from 3 trailer transports to slow moving swathers, the 110 km/h speed limit is far beyond what is safe or reasonable. Speed kills.

Resolution #1(a). Decrease the speed limit to 95 km/h

Everyone knows the driving public will push a speed limit of 110 km/h to 120+ km/h. This reality does not allow a driver to make one error or have one lapse. Changing from 110 km/h to 95 km/h adds only a few extra minutes to a 10 km drive. If Medicine Hat, Edmonton and Winnipeg can do it, we can too.

Resolution #1(b). Post signs: SLOW DOWN – SAVE LIVES

We post signs to warn drivers to save their windshields. We need to remind drivers why this speed change is necessary. I would encourage the Ministry to go even farther and use the dreadful statistics of this roadway on the signage. E.g.: Slow Down, Save Lives – 4 fatalities here; 110 collisions.

Resolution #1(c). A visible RCMP

I have driven the #1 nearly every day for 17 years back and forth from Regina to Emerald Park. And though I am not on the highway at all times of the day, I cannot remember the last time I saw a radar trap. The rumour mill says it is too dangerous for the RCMP to setup a speed stop along the Trans Canada. Ironic, isn't it?

Resolution #1(d). Photo Radar

Edmonton has used photo radar successfully to control speeds on many of its major routes, including Whitemud Drive and Anthony Henday Drive. Though unpopular, it will change driver behaviour and ultimately save lives. Many decisions are unpopular but someone has to speak for those who can no longer speak for themselves.

Issue #2. Inconsistent roadway design

If you are unfamiliar with this portion of the #1 east to Balgonie, it's a very garbled mixture of acceleration lanes and turning lanes. (Call me, I'll take you on a little tour). To speak in general terms is too confusing, so please follow this intersection by intersection description.

#1 and Tower Road (CTV)

1. No eastbound or westbound acceleration lanes from a left turn onto the #1.

Dozens of campers, Brandt Industries employees and transport trucks turn east here and immediately are forced into traffic coming behind them at 110 km/h. As well, the need for a westbound acceleration lane grows more urgent as the volume of traffic on Tower Road increases.

2. No eastbound speed up lane from a right turn onto the #1.

With the Victoria Avenue East traffic gridlock, more drivers are choosing to exit Regina via Arcola Avenue East and Tower Road. No lane is provided to speed up and merge into #1 traffic – only the shoulder with rumble strips.

Resolution #2. 1 and 2. Construction and Signage

#1 and CinderCrete/Buffalo Lookout

3. No westbound acceleration lane from a left turn onto the #1.

Dozens of campers and now construction vehicles (and soon employees from the under-construction new Redhead Equipment office) turn west here and immediately are forced into traffic coming behind them at 110 km/h.

4. No eastbound speed up lane from a right turn onto the #1.

No lane is provided to speed up and merge into #1 traffic – only the shoulder with rumble strips.

5. No southbound turning lane, from either direction, to access the Buffalo Lookout campground and new Redhead Equipment office.

There has never been a turning lane here for travel trailers to safely exit the #1, only the shoulder with rumble strips on the south and nothing from the north.

Resolution #2. 3, 4 and 5. Construction and Signage

#1 and Pilot Butte turn-off

6. No westbound acceleration lane from a left turn onto the #1.

As the line-ups grow increasingly longer at the Esso corner in Emerald Park, drivers take the westbound service road to this intersection. Plus with the recent addition of new businesses, employees and shoppers also return to Regina via this corner.

7. No southbound turning lane from a left turn or a right turn off the #1.

Drivers are turning here with more frequency as they access the growing retail centre. A high speed rear-end collision is imminent.

8. No eastbound speed up lane from a right turn onto the #1.

No lane is provided to speed up and merge into #1 traffic – only the shoulder with rumble strips

Resolution #2. 6, 7 and 8. Construction and Signage

#1 and Emerald Park Esso

See Issue #3. Signage

#1 and Emerald Park Road

9. No eastbound speed up lane from a right turn onto the #1.

No lane is provided to speed up and merge into #1 traffic – only the shoulder with rumble strips.

10. No intersection for westbound traffic

With an RCMP detachment soon to be located just metres from this intersection, access should be provided to travel westbound, without the necessity of driving down the Great Plains service road.

Resolution #2. 9 and 10. Construction and Signage

#1 and White City Drive

11. There is presently no exit ramp here but a ramp could follow the same road design as the White City exits and allow hundreds of homeowners access to their properties immediately south and off of White City Drive.

Resolution #2. 11. Construction and Signage

#1 and Highway #48

The much-delayed construction of south-side exit and entrance ramps will assist with traffic flow at this intersection, however problems still exist.

12. No northbound turning lane from a right turn off the #1.

Resolution #2. 11. Construction and Signage

#1 and Highway #46

13. No southbound turning lane from a right turn off the #1.

14. The #1 West ramp is poorly marked and if you proceed to the intersection, there is once again, no speed up lane from a right turn onto the #1.

15. There is no signage indicating an eastbound acceleration lane.

Resolution #2. 12, 13, 14 and 15. Construction and Signage

15 inconsistencies in 20 kilometres. Staggering. No wonder visitors are confused, and heaven help them if they have just one lapse and take a moment to try and figure it out.

What's more staggering is the fact that this construction will not equal even 3 kilometres. Simple acceleration lanes and turning lanes, with one possible exit ramp - standard fare I would think for the Trans Canada Highway. And bring on the signs please.

Issue #3. Signage

The need for signage with construction is mentioned throughout Issue #2. But, no where is the lack of signage more evident than at the #1 and Emerald Park Esso intersection.

1. There is no signage indicating a westbound acceleration lane.

Visitors to all of the new businesses (yes, we too have a Tim's now) approach this intersection intending to continue their journey to Regina. There is absolutely no indication of an acceleration lane and a delay in turning west is not what this intersection needs!

2. The eastbound ramp (to Winnipeg) signage is too small and incomplete.

Again, as the new businesses bring in visitors and patrons, more and more drivers believe they must turn right for Winnipeg at the intersection and completely miss the ramp and its signage. They are immediately forced into traffic coming behind them at 110 km/h.

3. A blue Services sign needs to be added for the South Plains Road exit ramp.

Visitors completely ignore this ramp and instead turn right at the intersection, bringing more traffic to an already super dangerous corner – simply because they do not know the ramp will take them to Tim's, the Esso and soon, the new Ramada Hotel.

Resolution #3. Added and improved signage

Issue #4. Highway distractions

1. The Important Intersection signs are a distraction. Every intersection on every roadway is important and dangerous.

2. The flashing speed signs on either side of the Pilot Butte intersection are distractions. Drivers need to be watching the vehicles in front of them as they approach the intersection and its many lanes of traffic, not checking if their speedometer matches the signs.

Resolution #4. Remove the signage

Issue #5. Traffic flow

If we look at the numbers and face reality, an overpass is not going to happen for many years. But as we wait, the dangers increase and still nothing...

Fact: 72 new sixteen-year-old drivers in White City/Emerald Park alone will begin travelling back and forth on the #1 in 2013. Please add in at least as many more new drivers from Pilot Butte and Balgonie.

Fact: As the line-ups increase at the busiest intersections, drivers begin taking chances. And, if transports wait longer than they feel is necessary, they enter the intersection even if it is not safe to do so.

Fact: At 5:10 p.m. during the work week, vehicles are regularly lined up more than a dozen cars deep exiting Emerald Park at the Esso intersection. This lineup blocks the exit ramp to Tim's, the westbound service road to the #1 as well as the gravel service road west to Pilot Butte.

Some improvements need to be made while we wait.

Resolution #5. Add traffic signals to the Pilot Butte intersection, the Emerald Park Esso intersection, #1 and #48, and #1 and #46. BUT, only during peak traffic times. The traffic signals would be triggered from pressure pads placed six or seven vehicles back in the lineups. If the vehicles wait for the required amount of time with no movement, the signals will begin operating.

With the addition of consistent lanes and signage, a decreased safer speed limit and signals during peak traffic flows, this roadway can wait. If nothing is done, lives will continue to be lost.

People are stopping me in the store, at the ball diamonds and even at my hair stylist asking what can we do? We used to be afraid, now we're terrified. Terrified to lose a child or attend another's funeral. Terrified because *every day* we witness 'a close one'. Terrified because people are driving faster and faster. Terrified because visitors just don't know.

Drive this highway regularly and see how you feel about prosperity. Not so great, and it's a shame.

With thanks and best regards,



September 7, 2012

Kathy Bellamy
10 Nicklaus Place
EMERALD PARK SK S4L 1B9

Dear Ms. Bellamy:

Thank you for your August 21, 2012 letter expressing your concerns for safety on Highway 1 east of Regina. Safety is a priority for the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure and something we keep in mind each and every day as we design, maintain and build our provincial transportation system. I appreciate the opportunity to respond on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan.

In conjunction with the municipalities and many stakeholders, the Ministry has undertaken several safety reviews and a long-term planning study on the Highway 1 corridor between Balgonie and Regina. Since 2010 when the study was complete, the Ministry has placed a priority on addressing traffic concerns on Highway 1 east of Regina.

The Ministry recognizes that there has been significant development and population growth in this area. In response to this growth, the Ministry has accelerated a number of initiatives in the area and allocated \$3.9 million in 2011-2012 to improve safety on Highway 1 east of Regina. A number of these projects are complete while some are still in progress. The initiatives include the following:

- The construction of the Highway 48 ramps began in 2011 and are expected to be completed in 2012;
- Highway 46 ramp work is expected to commence and be completed in 2012;
- Highway 1 Illumination Study between Regina and Balgonie;
- Installation of radar feedback speed signs at the Highway 1 and Pilot Butte access intersection is complete;
- The Ministry is in the process of ordering and erecting speed signs at Balgonie. They are expected to be installed in September; and
- Preliminary planning has begun on the Highway 1 and Pilot Butte Interchange.

We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to you for the time and effort you have committed to the many observations that you have identified on Highway 1. The Ministry has also identified a number of these concerns and is continuing to evaluate safety improvements Highway 1 east of Regina.

I would like to provide you with some general information on your observations:

Analysis using the Transportation Association of Canada's guidelines for setting speed limits determined that the current regulated 110 km/hr speed limit is appropriate to the function and physical characteristics of the Highway; lowering the speed limit to 95 km/hr may result in driver frustration and a significant increase in the probability of collisions. Nevertheless, the Ministry will continue to monitor speed limits along this corridor. Photo radar and speed control on this stretch of highway is the responsibility of the RCMP. I encourage you to contact the local RCMP detachment for more information.

The Ministry has a Safety Improvement Program (SIP) that is in place to fund projects that may improve safety issues on the provincial road network. Requests for intersection improvements like turning and acceleration lanes are evaluated based on criteria such as traffic volume, collision data, sight distance, roadway dimensions and operational considerations. If the minimum criteria are met, the improvement is entered into the SIP and prioritized against other safety projects throughout the province to be completed as budgets allow.

With the increase in traffic on Highway 1, there may be a need to improve signing along this corridor. Ministry staff will continue evaluating the signing to ensure there are adequate information and guidance signs for unfamiliar drivers.

My Ministry officials and I often receive requests to install traffic signals at rural intersections like you described in your letter. Studies show that traffic signals have the potential to reduce right angle collisions at intersections. However, studies also indicate that the installation of traffic signals at inappropriate locations can significantly increase rear end collisions at the location. In 2011 the Ministry commissioned an engineering consultant to review this area for traffic signals. The results were consistent with the Ministry's findings that signals at this location could potentially jeopardize safety.

I appreciate you bringing your concerns to my attention. If you would like to discuss your specific concerns in detail, please feel free to contact Ms. Penelope Semczyshyn, Senior Project Manager at (306)787-8353.

Yours truly,



Don McMorris

Minister of Highways and Infrastructure

cc: Honourable Brad Wall, Premier of Saskatchewan
Honourable Andrew Scheer, MP, Regina-Qu'Appelle
Honourable Christine Tell, MLA, Regina Wascana Plains
Don Toth, MLA, Moosomin
Bob Bjornerud, MLA, Melville-Saltcoats
Laura Ross, MLA, Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
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