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February 24, 2012

Carol Reid
Regional Clerk
Region of Peel
10 Peel Centre Drive
Brampton, ON L6T 4B9

Dear Ms. Reid

Re: Closure of the Ministry of Transportation Peel District Enforcement Office

This is to advise that Mississauga Council at its meeting on February 22, 2012, received a deputation by Edie Strachan, President, OPSEU Local 506 on the above-noted matter. Council also referred the matter to the Movements of Goods Committee at the Region of Peel.

Accordingly, please find enclosed herewith Ms. Strachan's presentation to Council.

By copy of this letter to Ms. Strachan, if you wish to request a deputation to Regional Council, you may contact the Regional Clerk's Office at 905-791-7800 to make arrangements.

Yours truly,

Carmela Radice
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Legislative Services Division
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cc. Ms. Edie Strachan, President, OPSEU Local 506

Enc.

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REGION OF PEEL
CLERKS DEPT.

Good morning Council. My name is Edie Strachan and I am the President of OPSEU Local 506 representing Transportation Enforcement Officers in Halton, Aurora, Toronto and Durham whose job focuses on the inspection and enforcement of commercial motor vehicle traffic. I do not – however - represent Transportation Enforcement Officers in Peel - because you no longer have any.

I'm going to break my presentation into four parts:

- 1) The press release my union issued in response the closure of your Ministry of Transportation Peel District Enforcement Officer.
- 2) The Ministry of Transportation and MPP Linda Jeffrey of Brampton Springdale's flawed assertions that your public safety will NOT be compromised AND taxpayers will save \$290,000 (and how you can replace the service yourselves for a mere 2 million)
- 3) Are our roads really safer?
- 4) Why Peel is at significant risk to escalating violations

PART 1: The press release my union issued in response the closure of your Ministry of Transportation Peel District Enforcement Officer.

On November 28th 2011 my Union issued a press release regarding the closure of YOUR Ministry of Transportation Peel District Enforcement Office.

PEEL – The Ontario government’s elimination of safety patrols for dangerous trucks in Peel Region will leave one of the province’s largest trucking hubs without basic safety enforcement, putting GTA motorists in grave danger, says the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU).

The elimination of the Peel Enforcement Office and the virtual elimination of area patrols in the region is part of the Ontario government’s goal of downsizing the public service by five per cent by Mar. 31, 2012.

Edie Strachan, president of OPSEU Local 506 and a transportation enforcement officer for the Ministry of Transportation, says that her members are extremely concerned about the danger to people in the GTA. “Peel Police only have two officers trained as inspectors and they will tell you, their mandate is not trucks.”

Strachan says that her members regularly find trucks with malfunctioning brakes and poorly-fastened wheels in Peel, which has more than a hundred bus operators and nearly a thousand garages doing truck and vehicle-safety certifications. “Now, unsafe trucks can go through Peel completely unimpeded without worrying whether their vehicles may be inspected to ensure they meet basic safety standards.”

PART II: The Ministry of Transportation and MPP Linda Jeffrey of Brampton Springdale's flawed assertions that your public safety will NOT be compromised AND taxpayers will save \$290,000

MPP Linda Jeffrey of Brampton Springdale was quoted in the Brampton Guardian as saying that taxpayers will save \$290,000 through the consolidation of Peel and Halton enforcement stations and that the amalgamation will maximize resources while maintaining public safety.

I call baloney. Let's look at some really rough numbers - and I admit they're really rough:

My employer – the Ministry of Transportation – has repeatedly suggested that your public service won't be impacted. If the Ministry had 17 officers working in Peel and the Ministry takes them all away you have zero. That is a loss. You and the residents of Peel have lost.

In order for your public service NOT to be impacted those 17 officers have to be assigned to work all their shifts in Peel. To do that they will have to attend their new work location and drive the Ministry cruiser all the way to and from Peel – probably in traffic. Estimating 17 officers commuting to/from Peel at about 2 hours per shift on a four day workweek. That is 136 hours a week or 7072 hours a year.

7072 hours of labour is pretty expensive. Now let's assign salary to that: 7072 hours of labour is approximately 247,520 – almost \$250,000 dollars in lost salary time. I'm not sure how to calculate the gas for 7072 hours of travel time but I bet the salary and gas is going to bring you close to \$290,000 Ms Jeffrey said was going to be saved.

I'm sure you're all familiar with the problems associated with provincial downloading and the stress it creates for municipalities. I suspect that our Ministry would be more than happy to train your Peel Police Officers to do this job. So you would need 17 police officers to keep the same standard of service. A 10 week training course would only cost the Region \$250,000 in salaries but doesn't include the additional cost of travel, meals accommodation. A yearly salary budget for 17 officers would run you a mere 1,360,000 before adding overtime, a Manager's salary for the new unit and some salary dollars for one or two supervisors. Oh of course you would need the cruisers fully outfitted, uniforms and tools and the costs continue. * PLUS * PLUS * PLUS *

Part III: Are our roads safer?

The Ministry has been slowing reducing and eliminating TEO staff through attrition.

The Ministry has removed enforcement staff from Peel Region.

Less officers ... means less inspections ... means less defects found and less violations ... means drivers and Carriers do not get penalized for 'bad trucks'. This isn't rocket science.

In response to the recent tragic and avoidable deaths the Ministry of Transportation reports a 'sharp reduction' in wheel separation incidents from 215 in 1997 to 47 in 2010 and 48 towards the end of 2011. Seven fatalities occurred during that period with two occurring in December of 2011. What is the relationship – if any – between less officers, less inspections and more deaths?

Furthermore, the majority of the wheel-off reports reported by the Ministry are generated by our own Officers during the regular course of their duties.

PART IV: Why Peel is at significant risk to escalating violations

Peel is the epicentre of commercial vehicle traffic in Ontario, has more carriers per square kilometre than anywhere else in the province and the highest traffic volume. It's absolutely astonishing that the Peel District Enforcement Office was disbanded.

An April 2011 Transportation Assessment report published on the Region of Peel website reports the following truck traffic:		
Halton boundary to the 410: - 1720 vehicles per hour westbound - 1960 vehicles per hour eastbound	410 to the 427 - 1690 vehicles per hour westbound - 1860 vehicles per hour eastbound	427 to the 400 - 2200 vehicles per hour eastbound - 1640 vehicles per hour westbound

The decision by the province to cut inspection patrols is profoundly weakening Ontario's truck safety inspection system - AND - citizens are being placed at unacceptable risk. This cut to your service puts your constituents at risk.

There will be MORE accidents, MORE injuries and MORE deaths on Ontario roads.

So let's put this into perspective for Peel Region. In the whole of Ontario we have about 227 officer positions on the books and an additional 38 auditor positions but not every position has a body working in it. So very roughly Peel probably had about 10% of the entire TEO workforce dedicated to Peel Region.

When you look at Ontario map it's this big (demonstrate)
 Peel Region is this big (demonstrate) and had roughly 10% of the entire TEO workforce dedicated to your roads.....
 and now you have (demonstrate)

So when (not if – when) there are MORE accidents, MORE injuries and MORE deaths on Ontario roads are they going to happen in high traffic / high trucking industry area with lots of officers or in high traffic / high trucking industry areas with NO officers?

I'm suggesting – and I hope to be proven wrong – that on the balance of probabilities Peel is going to suffer as a result.

PART V: Closing

The public – your constituents - expects our roads to be safe.

I'm not here because an officer lost their job. None of my officers lost their job.

I'm here because I KNOW you're losing a valuable public service and it's my responsibility to ensure that you recognise the implications of losing that service.

I am telling you that this erosion of public services WILL be a contributing factor to the next fatalities on Ontario roads.

And finally, I'm telling you that

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The best thing to do is the right thing
The next best thing is to do something
The worst thing you can do is nothing

Thank you all for your time.