

May 9, 2016

The Honourable Eddie Joyce
Minister of Service NL
P.O. Box 8700
St. John's, NL
A1B 4J6

Dear Minister,

Subject: Request for Review of Reinstatement of the Provincial Periodic Motor Vehicle Safety Inspection Program

On behalf of our delegation from the Automotive Industries Association (AIA) of Canada that met with you on April 12th, please allow me to extend our most sincere thanks for taking the time to meet with us. Your insights and positive support around the importance of vehicle safety inspections was most welcome.

As we discussed, Newfoundland & Labrador is in fact, the only Atlantic province without periodic mandatory vehicle inspections; Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick have annual programs while Nova Scotia's program is triggered every two years. Newfoundland and Labrador once had a mandatory periodic inspection program that was cancelled back in 1993. The lack of a periodic inspection program means that any person who buys a vehicle new or used today, can keep driving it for as long as they own it without ever requiring a post-purchase vehicle safety check.

AIA members see vehicles like the one referenced in this news article regularly, *CBC: Bald tires and squeaky brakes: Retired mechanic calls for mandatory inspections* <http://goo.gl/EfiOHp> and understand the important role government plays in ensuring vehicles on the provinces roadways are roadworthy.

During our meeting we also discussed an effectiveness study completed by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation that found that, "*Pennsylvania's Vehicle Safety Inspection Program is an effective program that reduces fatal crashes and saves lives in Pennsylvania*". In fact, the study went on to find that, "*Based on the model results, Pennsylvania can be expected to have between 115 and 169 fewer fatal crashes each year, corresponding to between 127 and 187 fewer fatalities each year, than it would if it did not have a vehicle safety inspection program*". The Study can be found here: <http://goo.gl/7TAeOs>.

Collecting specific data in North America correlating the state of a vehicle and its direct impact on causing vehicle collisions, injuries and deaths has been very difficult. Police forces do not typically collect this type of information at the scene of an accident for a number of reasons; they are not mechanical technicians, they do not inspect the vehicle unless a concern is raised (i.e. brakes did not work), and there are often other contributing factors such as driver fatigue or impairment. For this reason, the data we can illustrate to you is limited.

In Canada, one good reference is an investigative report completed by the Quebec coroner's office - <http://goo.gl/OZpmdA>. To paraphrase, the report found that although the exact benefits of such a safety program would be difficult to measure, they would provide the following benefits; victims are more likely to be well protected, there would be a reduction in the severity of injuries suffered by the victims, and it would reduce the number of deaths on the province's roadways. The coroner concludes the report by recommending that the province's public insurer introduce a periodic mandatory vehicle safety inspection tied to license plate renewal annually for older vehicles.

Another example with some significant statistics comes from overseas where Ireland's Road Safety Authority on April 4, 2016 issued a report analyzing vehicle factors as contributors to fatal collisions from 2008-2012 <http://goo.gl/gqX9W0>. Some of the most compelling stats are as follows:

- Of 858 fatal collisions in Ireland between 2008 and 2012, **motorized vehicle factors contributed to 101 collisions (11.7%)**.
- Of the 101 instances where vehicle factors were a contributory cause, **tires and brakes accounted for 80 of those instances (80%)**.
- Of collisions where vehicle factors were noted, **the condition of tires alone accounted for almost two thirds (64.1%) of collisions**.
- **The majority of defects were on light vehicles (84.8%)** while vans and motorcycles accounted for the remaining vehicles.

Furthermore, while our delegation was in St. John's we also met with thirteen of your caucus colleagues as follows:

1. Carol Anne Haley, Caucus Whip - Burin – Grand Bank
2. Hon. Dr. John Haggie Minister of Health and Community Services - Gander
3. Hon. Al Hawkins, Minister of Transportation and Works - Grand Falls – Windsor – Buchans
4. Hon. Perry Trimper, Minister of Environment - Lake Melville
5. Randy Edmunds, Caucus Chair - Torngat Mountains
6. Paul Lane, MHA & Deputy Chair of Committees [former Conservative who crossed] - Mount Pearl – Southlands
7. Graham Letto, MHA - Labrador West
8. Derek Bennett, MHA - Lewisporte – Twillingate
9. John Finn, MHA - Stephenville – Port au Port
10. Scott Reid, MHA - St. George's – Humber
11. Pam Parsons, MHA - Burgeo – La Poile
12. Mark Browne, MHA - Placentia West – Bellevue
13. Colin Holloway, MHA - Terra Nova

Our discussion primarily focused on the importance of mandatory vehicle inspections and dispelled some of the misconceptions that existed. I am extremely pleased to report to you that there was a

unanimous sense that at the very least, Service NL should begin a formal review of whether the province should reinstate the mandatory vehicle safety inspection program. In addition, many Members offered their support and asked to be copied on this letter as you will see below.

Based on the direction from caucus and on the experience of our frontline members, AIA would like to formally request that Service NL commence a review of whether the province's mandatory periodic motor vehicle safety inspection program should be reinstated.

In closing, it is important to recognize that these inspection programs run for the most part on a cost recovery basis in other provinces. In some cases, it is our understanding that certain provinces actually have developed a reliable revenue stream coming from operating these types of programs. As well, it is likely that the other provinces in Atlantic Canada will soon update their safety inspection programs to be more digitally up-to-date. For example, in the U.S., Vermont has just launched a tablet-based, vehicle safety and emissions check program. If Newfoundland and Labrador were to reinstate a safety inspection program, it would be reasonable to assume that there could be economies of scale gained from implementing a digitally up-to-date program at the same time as neighbouring provinces.

The Automotive Industries Association (AIA) of Canada is the national trade association representing the automotive aftermarket industry in Canada, a \$19.4 billion industry that employs 400,000 Canadians or approximately 50% of the automotive sector. Employment in Newfoundland and Labrador amounts to approximately 6,300 jobs.

Again, we urge you to implement a review of the merits of reinstating a periodic vehicle safety inspection program and offer our assistance in any consultations. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 613-809-4671 or Jason.Kerr@aiacanada.com should you or your staff have any further questions.

Sincerely,



Jason R. Kerr
Director of Government Relations, AIA Canada

CC: Hon. Perry Trimper, Minister of Environment and Conservation and MHA, Lake Melville
Hon. Cathy Bennett, Minister of Finance and MHA Windsor Lake
Carol Anne Haley, MHA, Burin – Grand Bank
John Finn, MHA, Stephenville – Port au Port
Paul Lane, MHA, Mount Pearl – Southlands
Jean-Francois Champagne, President, AIA Canada
Doug Reevey, AIA National Chair (Incoming)
Lynn Cormier, AIA Atlantic Division Chair