



April 28, 2012

The Honourable Denis Lebel

Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities

Transport Canada
Place de Ville Tower C, 29th Floor
330 Sparks Street
Mail Stop: XA
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N5

Re: Safe Trucks (Truck underrun) Legislation

Dear Mr. Lebel,

This letter is to express support for Member of Parliament (MP) Olivia Chow's petition asking for side guards (underrun protection) to be made mandatory on trucks in Canada. This followed a recommendation by the Regional Coroner for Toronto to investigate causes of cyclists' deaths. The Regional Coroner for Toronto concluded that trucks and other heavy vehicles were involved in 37% of crashes leading to the death of a cyclist. The study of cyclists deaths in British Columbia (BC) over the period 1986 to 1995 prepared by the BC Coroner shows that in 34% of the cases a cyclist died as a result of a collision with a truck or other heavy vehicle – a disproportionate fraction. This latter analysis also shows that bicycle helmets offer only limited protection in accidents with trucks, especially when the cyclist is pulled under the wheels of the truck or the trailer.

The Halifax Cycling Coalition (HCC) is a 400-member-strong organization of concerned citizens dedicated to improving cycling conditions in Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM). We believe that increased bicycle use has the potential to reduce traffic congestion, reduce infrastructure spending, improve our health, and enhance our urban environment. Consequently, we feel to encourage cycling in HRM and across the country we need to provide a safe cycling environment. The requirement of side guards should be legislated nationally to avoid further tragedies between cyclists, pedestrians and trucks. This legislation will prevent pedestrians and cyclists from falling under the tires of trucks by bouncing them away from the truck instead of under.

Halifax Cycling Coalition would like to support the efforts of the Toronto Cyclists Union and Member of Parliament Olivia Chow for raising this issue. Their efforts have brought needed attention to the preventable deaths of Ulrich Hartmann, Jessica Holman-Price, Ryan Carrier and Jenna Morrison. If trucks in Canada had sideguards they would be alive. Mandatory sideguards legislation has been in place in the United Kingdom and Europe for more than 3 decades. The Halifax Cycling Coalition urges you to recognize the importance of this issue and be a leader in making our cities and communities more pedestrian and bicycle friendly.

Sincerely
Ross Soward
Co-Chair Halifax Cycling Coalition
contact@cyclehalifax.ca

