



**ASSOCIATION OF VANCOUVER ISLAND
AND COASTAL COMMUNITIES**
525 Government Street, Victoria, BC V8V 0A8

May 19, 2010

The Honourable John Baird
Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities
Tower C – 330 Sparks Street
Ottawa, ON V8W 2P3

Dear Minister Baird:

RE: ACCESS TO TRANSPORTATION FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

The Association of Vancouver Island Coastal Communities (AVICC) represents the interests of its 51 member municipalities, regional districts and other local governments of Vancouver Island, Sunshine Coast, Powell River and Central Coast.

AVICC actively supports the need for *all* facets of the Canadian Transportation System to be accessible and useable by passengers with disabilities be they visual, auditory or mobility related.

At the AVICC Annual AGM & Convention held on April 9-11, 2010, those present passed Resolution LR11 which reads:

That the City of Parksville, on behalf of Parksville's Measuring Up Committee, lobby the Provincial and Federal Governments through the Association of Vancouver Island Coastal Communities, the Union of British Columbia Municipalities and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities that Canadian public transportation providers be required by law to provide physical access for disabled passengers in Canada similar to the United States' Americans with Disabilities Act which was adopted in 1990.

Despite progress in the 1980s, transportation policy in Canada remains plagued with numerous barriers for people with disabilities. Largely due to a 1993 federal government decision to make accessibility standards voluntary, Canada now lags far behind many industrialized countries, including the United States and Britain, who have implemented a system of regulation for fair and equitable access to transportation. It is obvious to all concerned, especially individuals with disabilities that the Canadian system is archaic and discriminatory.

The impact of our outdated system is exemplified by the misadventure of Ms. Catherine Frazee, Director of Ryerson's Institute for Disability Studies who was unable to travel from Toronto to Vancouver by train to participate in the recent 2010 Paralympic Games because VIA Rail could not accommodate her motorized wheelchair. She was forced to

travel to the United States to utilize transportation services that are barrier-free and allow for independent and dignified use.

To ensure the needs of travelers with disabilities are given precedence as new transportation policies, programs and services are developed Canada requires federal regulation and policy. This would prevent the creation of new barriers for those with disabilities while upholding the Supreme Court's ruling in regards to VIA Rail not creating new barriers.

The Association of Vancouver Island Coastal Communities calls upon the provincial and federal governments to rectify this non-inclusive and unacceptable solution as soon as possible for all Canadians with visual, auditory or mobility challenges! We would welcome your comments on this matter.

Sincerely yours,



Mayor Christopher Causton
President

cc The Honourable Shirley Bond, Provincial Minister of Transportation and
Infrastructure
Donald Wright, Chairman of the Board, VIA Rail
Chair Kevin D. Mahoney, BC Transit
President Jean Perrault, Federation of Canadian Municipalities
President Harry Nyce, Union of British Columbia Municipalities
Mayor Ed Mayne, City of Parksville
Gerry Price, Chairperson, Measuring Up Parksville Committee



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PO BOX 9055, STN PROV GOVT.
Victoria BC V8W 9E2

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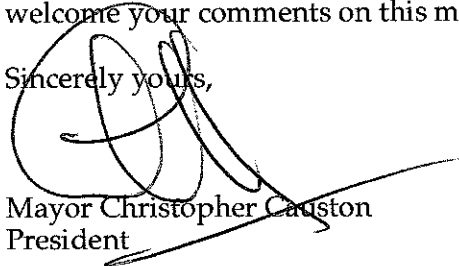
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