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Transportation Planner
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May 25, 2012

Dear Mr. MacNeil and Mr. Bruno,

The Durham Deaf Accessibility Committee was established five years ago with our main focus being advocacy for improved accessibility for the Deaf community in the Durham Region.

We had been in communication with Mr. Bruno regarding our concerns about the lack of accessibility for Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals travelling on the GO Transit system in the spring of 2010.

When we last communicated with each other about this issue, we had stated that the interim solution of encouraging people with hearing loss to depend on the service attendant in the accessibility car on GO trains was not favourable.

We asked that real time electronic LED signage be installed in at least one car per train for the time being which is much more preferable for us so we can maintain our independence without needing to be dependent on an attendant. Having to identify ourselves every time upon boarding a GO train would likely be viewed as cumbersome which outweigh the advantage of this accommodation strategy.

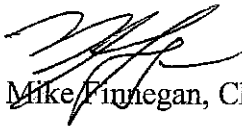
We have been meeting with our local MPPs in the Durham Region recently and communicated our concerns to them about the lack of accessibility for people with hearing loss, including seniors who may have become deafened in later life, travelling on the trains and buses of GO Transit.

Since some time has passed since our last correspondence, would it be possible for us to ask for an update on your plans to improve accessibility for people with hearing loss, including electronic real-time signage on the trains, buses and stations under GO Transit? In the letter Mr. Bruno wrote us on April 29, 2010, it was stated that this should be completed by the fall of 2012 and the winter of 2013/14.

In addition, Mr. McCuaig, President and CEO of Metrolinx, mentioned in the Accessibility Plan of 2011-12 that there was a video clip in American Sign Language explaining about how the Presto system works. Upon review of the GO Transit website, we were not able to find this video clip which means it is not easily found and accessible for people who may benefit from this.

As always, we thank you for your efforts in making travelling on the GO a more accommodating and comfortable experience for people with hearing loss. We hope to hear from you in the near future regarding our concerns.

Sincerely,



Mike Finnegan, Chair

cc: Durham Deaf Accessibility Committee – Don Kinsley, Veronica Bickle, Gordon Ryall, Beverley Dooley, Mirek Swiecicki, Kim Reid, David Hamen, Bryan Meany, Behishta Mushtaq and Robert Lang
cc: Bruce McCuaig, President and CEO, Metrolinx
cc: Chris Kenopic, President and CEO, The Canadian Hearing Society
cc: Maggie Doherty-Gilbert, Regional Director, The Canadian Hearing Society, Peterborough, York, Durham and City of Kawartha Lakes Regions
cc: Rex Banks, Director, Hearing Health Care, The Canadian Hearing Society
cc: Tracy MacCharles, MPP, Pickering-Scarborough-East
cc: Joe Dickson, MPP, Ajax-Pickering
cc: Christine Elliott, MPP, Whitby-Oshawa
cc: Jerry Ouellette, MPP, Oshawa
cc: John O'Toole, MPP, Durham