AUG 25 2008

His Worship Fred Eisenberger
Mayor
The City of Hamilton
Hamilton City Centre
77 James Street North
Suite 230
Hamilton, Ontario
L8R 2K3

Dear Mayor Eisenberger:

Thank you for your letter forwarding the Resolution of Hamilton City Council, recommending that the implementation of administrative drivers licence suspension for administering over .05 blood alcohol concentration, passed under the Safer Roads for a Safer Ontario Act (2007), be expedited.

I can appreciate why your council and other municipal authorities would like to see the commencement of this program expedited and the transitional period between the amendments and the implementation of the new measures kept to the minimum.

I can assure you that the government is committed to implementing the new measures as soon as possible. To this end, a number of ministry staff and lawyers have been working for months on developing the policies and operational procedures that are required to bring this program into effect since the passage of the bill. As you can appreciate, there are many road safety issues involved in making changes to the way suspended drivers regain their driver’s licences. To mention only one key aspect of our work, substantial changes to our Information Technology systems will be required to allow police to register these suspensions quickly on our system and to ensure that the drinking driver will be caught if he or she drives again during the suspension period. As is often the case with IT changes, careful preparation and faultless computer programming are essential for a successful program launch and therefore these are business processes where timelines and corners cannot be cut.

As you can appreciate, there are many road safety stakeholders my ministry needs to consult in developing the new measures. For this purpose, my ministry has formed a working group that is made up of representatives from different police services from across the province, along with representatives of the Ontario Police College and the Ministry of the Attorney General. This group is engaged in ongoing consultation to ensure the smoothest possible implementation of these new drinking and driving countermeasures, including streamlining business processes and automating the suspension process to handle increased workloads. The details of the program, and the regulations to be made in support of it, should be publicly available in late 2008.

I notice that you have also forwarded this resolution to the federal government. I am confident that the Honourable Lawrence Cannon, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, or his staff, will review the resolution.
The federal government is responsible for setting the Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) limit, under the Criminal Code of Canada.

Again, thank you for bringing your council's recommendation to our attention and please accept my best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

Jim Bradley
Minister

C: The Honourable Chris Bentley, Attorney General, Ontario
The Honourable Lawrence Cannon, federal Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities
The Right Honourable Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada