JUN 20 2006

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JUN 15 2006

His Worship Larry Di Ianni
Mayor
City of Hamilton
71 Main Street West
Hamilton, Ontario
L8P 4Y5

Dear Mayor Di Ianni:

Thank you for writing to me with Hamilton City Council’s motion concerning firefighters and occupational related diseases.

This government values the hard work and dedication of firefighters. The Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB), an arm’s-length agency of the Ministry of Labour, has the responsibility for adjudicating firefighters’ occupational disease claims. In doing so, the WSIB relies on the most up-to-date scientific evidence for adjudicating cancer claims.

The WSIB recognizes the link between certain cancers, such as primary malignant brain cancer and lymphoid leukemia, and firefighting activities, and accordingly compensates firefighters who contract these work-related cancers. In addition, the WSIB continues to evaluate all other claims case by case. I have been informed that the board is reconsidering previously denied colorectal claims made by firefighters based on an extensive review of new scientific evidence on that matter.

On May 3, 2006, I announced a comprehensive review of current policies in all Canadian jurisdictions on workplace compensation for firefighters battling cancer. This will include a review of the most up-to-date scientific information available. My Parliamentary Assistant, Mr. Mario Racco, will lead the review process, meeting with the WSIB, firefighter representatives, and the Fire Service Health and Safety Advisory Committee to identify firefighters’ health and safety concerns.

Once again, thank you for writing and sharing this document with me.

Sincerely,

Steve Peters
Minister