

AODA

OPTA has continued to be in discussions with MCSS concerning the three major standards nearing completion: Information and Communications, Employment and Transportation, as well as provide input on the Built Environment Standard which was finalized in May. OPTA has continued to advocate for greater integration of the standard requirements as well as reasonable and sustainable implementation timeframes. Minister Meilleur recently announced that MCSS is now in the process of combining the three standards "into one streamlined, proposed regulation" which will then be posted on the Ministry web site and will be open for public comment. We would encourage all members to review the standard when posted, and provide feedback to MCSS. OPTA will also participate in the public review and provide comments on behalf of the industry at large.

The other recent development is that the report by Charles Beer on the independent review of the AODA legislation is now public. You can view a copy by visiting: www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/documents/en/mcsc/accessibility/Charles%20Beer/Charles%20Beer.pdf

RESPONSE TO ELIMINATION OF THE OBRP

The elimination of the OBRP effective in 2011 was disappointing for the industry, even if it was not a total surprise. OPTA is in the process of outlining the scope of a research paper which will address the implications of reduced levels of transit funding from the Province, looking at not only the OBRP, but other programs as well. The paper will address the impact of the OBRP funding cut on a property's service planning, future fleet size and maintenance costs, plans for accessibility

compliance, as well as other issues. The objective is to make policy makers aware of the importance of transit funding and the tradeoffs and choices that will be necessary if long term, sustainable funding is not in place.

CVOR

OPTA is working with the Ontario Waste Management Association and other associations to lobby for changes to CVOR rules which adversely impact those industries whose transportation patterns are characterized by low speeds and multiple stops. The MTO introduced changes to CVOR rules two years ago that shifted the focus of calculating violation rates to kilometric travel. OPTA objected to the changes at the time, but was 'outvoted' during the consultations prior to the new rules being put into force. As we feared, the two-year experience with the new rules has seen an increase in violation rates for groups like transit and the waste management industry. At the same time, safety records have remained consistent. The coalition is circulating a short survey of its members to document the impact of the new rules, noting the objective is to level the playing field and return the system to a more equal footing for all industry sectors. If you want more information about this short survey or are interested in contributing any recent data, please contact Norm Cheesman at cheesman@ontariopublictransit.ca.

MTO REVIEW OF VEHICLE WEIGHTS & DIMENSIONS

OPTA and CUTA have submitted a joint letter to MTO which is looking at changing the regulations concerning eligible weights and dimensions for buses

in the province. Over the past 20 years, a significant number of innovations and improvements, often mandated by new laws or regulation (such as emission improvements and accessibility) have contributed to transit bus weight increases. The OPTA/CUTA position stipulates that transit vehicles should be exempted from such regulations (as has been done in BC) or that consideration should be given to raising the maximum load for dual tire axle vehicles to 25,000 lbs as has been done in two U.S. states, Nevada and Virginia. We are awaiting a reply from the MTO on this subject.

DRIVER'S LICENSE EXTENSION PERIOD TO END ON SEPT 1ST

Last summer, Regulation 318/09 was put into place for the purpose of extending the driver's licenses for those who were unable to fulfill their test requirements due to the labour disruption at Ontario Drive Test Centres. License holders who have been extended by this regulation will need to complete their rest requirements before Sept 1st, and those who allow their licenses to expire will have to reapply.

MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

Many of you recently completed the online membership survey and your cooperation was appreciated. The Board will be discussing the information gathered from the survey at an upcoming Strategic Planning session as part of the update of OPTA's Business Plan.

Some of the highlights of the survey include:

- "Availability of Funding" is perceived as the most important factor influencing the delivery of public transportation services over the next 3 years, followed by support at the municipal level and AODA regulations;
- Respondents indicated that OPTA's top 4 priorities in the coming year should be: government relations, data collection and assessment, the annual conference and regional managers' meetings;

- 74% of respondents indicated that the fees for OPTA were "appropriate for the services provided";
- 87% of respondents indicated that, from their perspective, OPTA's performance over the past 3 years ranged from Good to Excellent.

BILL 168 BECOMES LAW JUNE 15TH

Violence in the Workplace legislation becomes law effective June 15th, by which time employers must have in place policies for dealing with both violence and harassment in the workplace. OPTA has filed a Freedom of Information request with the Ministry of Labour to obtain the internal ministry guidance documents that will be used by MoL Inspectors as they enforce the new legislation. Once this document has been obtained, it will be shared with members. For more information from the Ministry of Labour, please visit: www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/topics/workplaceviolence.php

FALL REGIONAL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Planning is now underway to set dates and locations for the Fall Regional meetings. If you are willing to host a meeting, or know of a good venue in your community where we could hold a meeting, please let us know. Meetings of the Marketing, Maintenance and Training committees will also be scheduled once Regional meeting dates have been established. If you are interested in getting on the mailing list of any of these committees, please contact Norm Cheesman at OPTA. In the meantime, please watch your email for times and locations as details are confirmed.



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