



June 6, 2011

Mr. Tim Hudak, MPP  
Leader of the Opposition  
Queen's Park, Main Building, Rm 381  
Toronto, Ontario  
M7A 1A8

Dear Mr. Hudak:

RE: "changebook"

Congratulations on the recent release of *changebook*, the Ontario PC Party's policy platform. We are pleased with the timely preparation of the document, thereby allowing for considerable discussion and debate before the election campaign begins in earnest.

As I am sure you are aware, public transit plays a vital role in the lives of millions of Ontarians, getting people to work, school, shopping, recreational activities and health care. At the same time, businesses depend on the transportation network to deliver supplies and bring products and services to market. Transit reduces the amount of road and parking space required, mitigates traffic congestion, and provides economic benefits evaluated at greater than 2:1. Transit ridership is growing at triple the rate of population growth and is a vital link in how our communities function. It is critical to our competitiveness and our attractiveness as a province in which to invest and do business.

Much of the success in transit's ridership growth in Ontario – and its contribution to curbing traffic congestion – is directly attributable to the provincial gas tax program. This funding has been successful largely because of its narrow target and its dedication specifically to transit. Notwithstanding the success of the program to date, the application of the gas funds has gradually been expanded from one of supporting service growth and related infrastructure needs to meeting the requirements of new environmental, labour, accessibility, and other

regulatory or legislative requirements. This expanded application has diluted the original objective and effectiveness of the program.

Expanding the application and eligibility of the gas tax fund beyond public transit – as referenced in *changebook* – will further reduce the effectiveness of the program. It will make it difficult for transit systems to sustain the gains to date let alone build on those gains in response to need and expectations going forward.

This type of investment is critical if we are to equip our cities and communities with effective and efficient transit systems that will be in a position to respond when people look for alternatives to driving as the price of commuting in personal vehicles continues to climb. In this context I believe our goals are well aligned – to reduce the transportation cost of Ontarians and to give them more productive time. Efficient and effective public transit can accomplish both of these goals.

We would appreciate the opportunity to discuss how efficient, effective and supported public transit systems align with the goals of your Party and potentially an Ontario PC government.

Yours sincerely,



Norman Cheesman

c.c. Frank Klees, MPP, Newmarket-Aurora  
Michael Roschlau, President & CEO, CUTA  
Kelly Palezcny, Chair, OPTA  
Larry Ducharme, Chair, Ontario Region, CUTA