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Ontario Trucking Association News Release

Mandatory Activation of Speed Limiters on Trucks Gets Green Light from Ontario Government

OTA applauds move which it says will improve safety and reduce GHG emissions.

(Toronto: July 3, 2007) - Ontario Transportation Minister, Donna Cansfield, has announced that the Government of Ontario will introduce legislation after this fall's provincial election to adopt a proposal put forward by the Ontario Trucking Association almost two years ago to make it a mandatory requirement for virtually all tractor trailer units that operate into, out of and within Ontario to activate their speed limiters so that a truck will not be able to exceed 105 km per hour. In so doing, Ontario is the first jurisdiction in North America to formally announce its commitment to legislate such a requirement. Quebec has proposed the measure as part of its climate change plan and other trucking associations throughout North America are endorsing speed limiter proposals consistent with OTA's and now the Ontario government's policy. A number of jurisdictions, including the US Department of Transport and Transport Canada are studying the issue and groups like OTA are hopeful that now that Ontario is officially on board, others will follow and eventually a North American standard can be achieved.

However, for now, OTA President David Bradley, says "this is a great step forward for highway safety and for the environment."

"Even though truck drivers are on the whole the least likely to be excessively speeding, the means exist through activation of speed limiters to virtually eliminate it and to improve lane discipline at the same time," he said.

"The trucking industry is showing real leadership in supporting strong measures to eradicate speeding. Our drivers are professionals and we don't feel we need to use up scarce police resources catching speeding trucks when most trucks already come equipped with the technology to control speed."

He said he hopes tough measures will also be introduced to curb speeding by other motorists, especially in light of the tragic death of truck driver, David Virgoe, who died on June 18 as the result of an alleged speed racing incident involving two cars. "Car drivers need to slow down as well, but someone needs to lead the way and it might as well be the trucking industry which already has the safest drivers and vehicles on the road," he said.

Bradley admitted that the OTA proposal has at times been a controversial one within the industry, with some truck drivers and companies being opposed. However, he says "the fact is more than half the trucks on the road are already governed because it makes such good sense. I have been struck by the level of support for this measure from within the industry, from drivers and from fleets of all sizes both from Ontario and those based elsewhere. I am confident that in time most of those who are opposed will see the merit, just as happened after seat belts were made mandatory. "

The minister has said that she will take the summer to work with stakeholders to prepare the legislation and iron out details of how the mandate will be applied.

"Minister Cansfield deserves a lot of credit," says Bradley. "She has been supportive of our plan all along and has worked hard to hear everyone's point of view, including the police and even the few groups who indicated they had concerns with or were opposed to what we were trying to accomplish. She always told us to keep the faith."

The Ontario Trucking Association (OTA) was founded in 1926, and provides services and public policy advocacy for trucking companies hauling freight into, out of and within the Province of Ontario. www.ontruck.org

Rebecka Torn

Manager, Communications
Ontario Trucking Association

(v) 416.249.7401 x 224

(f) 1.866.713.4188

www.ontruck.org