

Ontario's Minister of Transportation announces the "Making Ontario's Roads Safer Act" to amend the "Highway Traffic Act"

Last Tuesday Transportation Minister Steven Del Duca announced he will be introducing the ***Making Ontario Roads Safer Act*** in the legislature. This Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act has many of the same HTA amendments that comprised the previous *Keeping Ontario Roads Safe Act* introduced by the previous Minister last March, but died when the writ was dropped.

The amendments in the Act include strengthening the language around the prohibition against buses other than school buses that are, in whole or in part, school bus (chrome) yellow in colour. While the law that says only a school bus can be painted chrome yellow has been on the books for decades, the current wording in the HTA is poor such that it is unenforceable. The amended law will make it illegal for anyone to operate a bus, other than a school bus, that is painted in whole or in part chrome yellow.

Other amendments to the HTA included in the *Making Ontario Roads Safer Act* include:

- Increasing fines for distracted driving from its current range of \$60 to \$500 to a range of \$300 to \$1,000; assigning three demerit points upon conviction; and adding distracted driving to the existing list of novice driver conditions.
- Applying current alcohol impaired sanctions to drivers who are drug impaired.
- Introducing additional measures to address repeat offenders of alcohol impaired driving.
- Requiring drivers to wait until a pedestrian has completely crossed the road before proceeding at school crossings and pedestrian crossovers.
- Increasing fines and demerits for drivers who "door" cyclists, and requiring all drivers to maintain a distance of one metre when passing cyclists, where practicable.
- Helping municipalities collect unpaid fines by expanding licence plate denial for drivers who do not pay Provincial Offences Act fines.