

Ministry of
Transportation

Office of the Minister

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107-2019-4096

Mr. Peter Kryger
President
Solid Waste Association of North America - Ontario Chapter
PO Box 25057
Stone Road PO
Guelph ON N1G 4T4

Dear Mr. Kyger:

Thank you for your letter regarding Ontario's Slow Down Move Over (SDMO) law. I appreciate the opportunity to respond.

I want to assure you that the Ministry of Transportation takes the safety of all road users very seriously. Ontario has some of the safest roads in North America, and we are working hard to ensure they stay this way.

As you noted, section 159 of the *Highway Traffic Act* (HTA), currently requires motorists to slow down and, where possible, move over when approaching a stopped emergency response vehicle with its red, or red and blue, emergency lights flashing or tow trucks with amber lights flashing.

Without question, roadside workers, including waste collection workers like those represented by the Solid Waste Association of North America, provide vital services throughout Ontario. While other roadside workers who are not captured within SDMO, such as waste management personnel, operate at roadside, their duties are generally conducted on safer, more predictable low-speed residential roadways as opposed to potentially dangerous high-speed settings faced by emergency vehicles and tow trucks. The SDMO requirements reflect the need for emergency first responders and tow truck operators to assist in high-risk, high-speed and often dangerous, uncontrolled roadside situations. The ministry encourages all drivers to slow down and drive cautiously and carefully around all vehicles stopped at roadside.

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With respect to your request regarding the expansion of SDMO requirements, the ministry must give careful consideration to potential road safety implications before it can extend SDMO privileges set out in the HTA.

The ministry acknowledges that roadside collisions are often related to speeding, distracted driving and impaired driving. Ontario has tough measures in place to protect all motorists and roadside workers from these high-risk behaviours. These measures include Ontario's distracted driving law. As of January 1, 2019, Ontario now has the toughest penalties for repeat distracted driving convictions, and Ontario is the first jurisdiction to have a licence suspension for distracted drivers, upon conviction.

At this time the ministry is not considering expanding the SDMO requirements within the HTA. Please be assured that your request will be kept on file for future consideration.

Thank you again for writing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Caroline Mulroney". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Caroline Mulroney
Minister of Transportation