

Transportation and Highway Safety Ministers work together to improve safety, reduce pollution as well as increase competitiveness and innovation

January 21, 2019, Montréal – Today, the Honourable Marc Garneau, Canada’s Minister of Transport, and the Honourable Lori Carr, Minister of Highways and Infrastructure for Saskatchewan, co-chaired the annual Council of Ministers responsible for Transportation and Highway Safety.

Ministers also met earlier today, in a separate meeting, with Indigenous representatives to continue their ongoing dialogue on shared transportation issues.

Enhance safety

The Humboldt and Ottawa tragic accidents were acknowledged by Ministers as reminders of the need for continued work to improve road safety in Canada.

Ministers continue to work together to strengthen road safety in Canada, emphasizing a collaborative approach among jurisdictions to address impaired and distracted driving. Education of the public continues to be key in tackling these issues, including messaging on updates to the criminal code that address impaired driving, now that recreational cannabis is legal in Canada.

Ministers discussed the importance of strengthening commercial motor vehicle safety. In particular, they agreed to build upon and leverage the work undertaken by several jurisdictions to develop a standard for entry-level training for commercial drivers in Canada by January 2020. This standard will help ensure drivers have the necessary knowledge and skills to safely operate commercial vehicles.

Ministers also agreed to advance the dialogue on finalizing harmonized technical standard for electronic logging devices, and examining the use of emerging automated and connected technologies to improve road safety in Canada.

Following the publication of a summary report on [Safety Measures for Cyclists and Pedestrians Around Heavy Vehicles](#) in October 2018, Ministers also agreed to advance efforts to protect road users around heavy vehicles by collecting more data and reviewing standards and regulations to increase road safety.

Additionally, Ministers are committed to continue working together to explore potential measures to strengthen school bus safety, including the installation of seat belts. To that end,

Ministers have created a Task Force to bring together federal/provincial/territorial government representatives and a diverse stakeholder community (e.g. safety associations, manufacturers, school board representatives) to identify and assess potential measures to improve school bus safety including seatbelts.

Address climate change

Transportation accounts for a quarter of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Canada, with almost half coming from cars and light trucks. Ministers reiterated their commitment to reducing Canada's GHG emissions from the transportation sector and discussed their current and planned efforts to put more zero-emission vehicles on the road, building on the work and research they have conducted in this area. Ministers will continue to work together to advance zero-emission vehicle uptake, given the potential to significantly reduce emissions through this technology. They will continue collaborating with industry, academia, businesses, Indigenous Peoples, environmental groups, consumers, local government, and international partners to identify opportunities for the adoption of these cleaner vehicles in Canada.

Leverage trucking sector to support our trade corridors

Ministers endorsed the [Trucking Harmonization Task Force Report](#) and recognized the critical role of an efficient trucking sector in supporting economic growth and competitiveness in Canada. The Report examined issues raised by stakeholders that impede the efficient flow of interprovincial trade, with a view to eliminating barriers and reducing irritants to the movement of goods by truck within Canada.

Ministers also agreed to establish the same weight limits for wide base single tires as dual tires within their respective jurisdiction. This will further harmonize regulations, improve the productivity of trade corridors, and reduce GHG emissions to ensure that Canada's transportation system supports the safe, competitive, and seamless transportation of goods.

Collaborate on innovation

Ministers have agreed on the importance of the safe deployment of automated and connected vehicles and endorsed a tool to guide efforts by federal, provincial and territorial jurisdictions for a coordinated approach for the testing and deployment of these vehicles on Canadian roads. The [Automated and Connected Vehicles Policy Framework for Canada](#) will help advance shared objectives and strengthen partnerships to promote, test and invest in these technologies as well as achieve a safer, more efficient and innovative transportation system.

This framework is supported by other federal, provincial and territorial guidelines released in 2018 such as the [Testing Highly Automated Vehicles in Canada](#) and the [Canadian Jurisdictional Guidelines for Safe Testing and Deployment of Highly Automated Vehicles](#).

Address mobility challenges

Ministers recognize the importance for every Canadian to be able to access transportation services, particularly in Indigenous, Northern and remote communities.

In August 2018, a federal, provincial and territorial working group was created to address growing mobility challenges and better understand the impacts of recent service reductions. Over the next two years, the group will continue to explore innovative transportation solutions with the ultimate goal of addressing the long-term mobility needs of Canadians.

Ministers recognize the importance of urban regions to the Canadian economy and the need to find solutions to urban mobility challenges such as congestion. The Council agreed to establish a Task Force to study how to improve the flow of people and goods through urban centres, keeping Canada's cities competitive and attractive for investment.

"During our meeting, we had the opportunity to discuss topics that have a direct impact on the day-to-day life of Canadians from coast to coast to coast," said the Honourable Marc Garneau, Minister of Transport. "I have witnessed great collaboration among participants. For example, we reached a consensus on standard training for truck drivers. We also discussed school bus safety. Our ongoing constructive discussions are key to ensure everyone's safety."

"It has been my honour to co-chair the Council of Ministers for Transportation and Safety meeting," said the Honourable Lori Carr. "We are committed to keeping Saskatchewan and Canada competitive in the global marketplace. The Council has also taken important steps to improve road safety for Canadians. This year's meeting has been an excellent opportunity to collaborate with the aim to grow our regional and national economies, identify solutions and innovations for safety, as well as reduce red tape and remove barriers to trade. Saskatchewan recognizes differences in each jurisdiction on adoption of zero vehicle emission. Ministers did not reach consensus on targets and further work is needed with that respect."

Federal, provincial and territorial Ministers have agreed to continue to work together to enhance transportation safety, support trade, improve mobility in urban and remote communities, foster innovation and address climate change so that Canadians can depend on a modern transportation system that is safe, reliable and efficient for generations to come¹.

¹ Agreement was reached by all delegations with the exception of the Government of Ontario.

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