

April 21, 2012

Stop100.ca's Response to the Minister of Transportation Bob Chiarelli

"Speed Too Fast" driver action attributed to only 7% of fatalities.

The stop100.ca movement with over 800 identified and millions of anonymous supporters around the Province want to express a sincere disappointment with the remarks made by the Minister of Transportation Bob Chiarelli. The minister is ignoring roadway design, traffic engineering principles and public pressure in his decision to dismiss and disregard our call to establish speed limits which reflect prevailing travel speeds and the excellent roadway design of Ontario's 400-series highways and those seen in many parts of the developed world, including most of the European Union and the Western United States.

The Minister's remarks are sadly ignoring a vast number of constituents in Ontario. Although the Minister stated that "there is not a groundswell in the public to increase speed limits on the roads," multiple polls show a clear majority ranging from 57% to a staggering 90% and by any reasonable estimation this is a groundswell of support for the measure. Links to the poll results are presented below.

When the Minister insists that 100 km/h is the most prudent speed, he ignores what the average driver on our 400-series highways, who drives these roads every day, considers a prudent speed.

The Minister's claim that 120 km/h is "fast" further supports our assertion that he is unaware of the real speeds practiced on our roads as well as those accepted for decades in many states in the USA as well as in the majority of countries around the world. Furthermore, stop100.ca believes that drivers travelling at 100 km/h, or about 20 km/h under the average speed, pose a danger on our roads. The Minister admitted to cruising at 100 km/h on 400-series highways and 40 km/h on municipal roads. We strongly believe that such driving frequently causes other motorists to brake rapidly, tailgate or frantically attempt to pass. The Minister confirms: "I occasionally have a tailgater and people passing me in a no passing zone". We urge the Minister to keep up with the flow of traffic, rather than impede it, for his own safety as well as those around him. This will also serve as a lesson of the real speeds observed on our roads.

We remind the minister that the speed limit of 100 km/h was established as a fuel saving measure in 1976 and not out of safety. The speed limit prior to the OPEC oil embargo was 112 km/h.

We would also like to correct the Minister's statistics regarding the number of fatalities caused by excessive speed by publishing the actual 2008 MTO statistics. Link to the table is presented below.

The data clearly shows that "Speed Too Fast" contributed to 64 out of 962 fatalities or 6.6% of all drivers' actions leading to a fatality. This is vastly different than the 20% as communicated by the Minister on April 18th. If "Speed Too Fast for Conditions" category is added (which suggests speeding in wet or snowy conditions, which are clear signs of reckless behaviour rather than simply driving too fast) the cause of fatalities is still significantly below 21% at 12.8%. This clearly shows that only one in 15 fatalities (or one in 8, if weather conditions are factored in) is actually caused by speed.

Table 2.8: Apparent Driver Action by Class of Collision, 2008

Apparent Driver Action	Class of Collision			
	Fatal	Personal Injury	Property Damage	Total
Driving Properly	403	38,994	157,914	197,311
Following Too Close	8	7,134	26,602	33,744
Speed Too Fast	64	810	1,582	2,456
Speed Too Fast for Conditions	60	4,453	17,348	21,861
Speed Too Slow	0	66	214	280
Improper Turn	16	3,599	11,476	15,091
Disobey Traffic Control	48	3,770	5,988	9,806
Fail to Yield Right of Way	77	8,337	19,851	28,265
Improper Passing	11	631	2,711	3,353
Lost Control	122	6,128	18,734	24,984
Wrong Way on One Way Road	3	92	187	282
Improper Lane Change	17	1,537	9,658	11,212
Other*	92	4,755	18,692	23,539
Unknown	41	1,776	30,918	32,735
Total	962	82,082	321,875	404,919

* Includes actions such as hit and run, driving on the wrong side of the road, improper parking and illegally parked.

We want to sincerely thank the OPP officers who use their best judgment and discretion and allow the traffic to flow safely at 120-130 km/h. Those officers are the unspoken heroes who recognize the excellent design and condition of our roads and what speed is safe.

To all our supporters, rest assured the cause is as strong as ever and with the enormous public and media support we will continue to represent millions of Ontario drivers who demand the government to recognize speeds of 120-140 km/h as safe and contributing to the “safest roads in North America” as once again confirmed by the Minister.

We urge the Minister to reconsider stop100.ca’s demands. Stop100.ca believes that drivers of our 400-series highways have spoken through multiple polls and for years have expressed their demands on the road and now is their time to be heard.

We will not sit back and be ignored by those we elect to represent us. The voters in Ontario will not be ignored by a Minister of Transportation so completely out of touch with the reality of what’s happening on Ontario’s 400-series highways.

Chris Klimek
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Poll results:

City TV - 57%:

<http://www.citytv.com/toronto/citynews/news/local/article/201276--group-s-push-for-higher-speed-limits-on-ontario-highways-rejected>

Toronto Sun - 70% (9116 votes cast):

<http://www.torontosun.com/poll/should-the-speed-limit-be-raised-on-ontarios-highways>

Sympatico.ca - 70% (2674 votes cast): <http://autos.sympatico.ca/auto-news/13603/ontario-turns-down-130-km-h-limit-proposal>

stop100.ca's (poll by a third party polling web site) - 89% (1588 votes cast):

http://kwiksurveys.com/?s=LHEINO_fac358f6

Statistics incorrectly quoted to the media by the MTO:

Ontario Road Safety Annual Report (ORSAR) 2008

URL: <http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/safety/orsar/orsar08/people.shtml>

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