Tabled by the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure
K. Hawkins Gyr

Newfoundland & Labrador

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
Department of Transportation and Infrastructure
Office of the Minister

November 2, 2026

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Dean Ball, Mayor of the Town of Deer Lake

Re: Request for Engineering Review of Proposed Changes to the Trans-Canada Highway

Dear Mayor Ball,

Thank you for your letter regarding the Bennett Avenue/Simmons Tire intersection and your request for further engineering review of potential left-turn movements at this location.

The Department of Transportation and Infrastructure has already undertaken extensive review and analysis of traffic operations and safety concerns along this section of the Trans-Canada Highway in Deer Lake. These reviews have consistently identified significant safety concerns associated with the number of access points and turning movements along this short corridor. Within approximately 0.5 kilometres of highway, there are currently 13 accesses operating with unrestricted left- and right-turn movements onto and from the Trans-Canada Highway. This level of access density on the main provincial highway creates a substantial number of conflict points and contributes to driver workload and decision-making complexity. As traffic volumes continue to grow, these conditions increase the potential for collisions and present ongoing highway safety concerns.

In an effort to address these concerns, the Department has evaluated and advanced several options aimed at improving safety while maintaining reasonable access to adjacent properties and future development. One option considered was the extension of a median through the entire corridor, eliminating all left-turn movements and directing traffic to existing grade-separated interchanges located approximately 1.6 kilometres apart. This approach would provide continued access to both sides of the highway while significantly reducing conflict points and improving overall safety.

Recognizing the concerns expressed by the Town and local businesses regarding this approach, the Department developed a compromise solution. Under this design, existing businesses along the corridor would continue to retain both left- and right-turn access, while the median would be extended only partway through the corridor. This would permit existing operations to continue largely unchanged while ensuring that the Bennett Avenue intersection functions as a right-in/right-out access only for future development.

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In addition to these measures, the Department committed to developing a new access from Route 430 to better serve existing and future development in the area. This access would provide a safer and more appropriate connection to the provincial highway network, provided that the Town and/or developers are prepared to complete the necessary connecting road infrastructure to link the existing and proposed developments to the new intersection. The Department continues to view this connection as an important component of a long-term solution for the area.

Despite these efforts, your recent correspondence indicates that the Town remains opposed to this compromise and continues to advocate for additional left-turn movements at Bennett Avenue.

While the Department has consistently sought to balance highway safety, economic development, and the concerns of local businesses and the Town, I believe we have reached an impasse. As Minister responsible for highway safety, I must ensure that appropriate measures are taken to address known safety concerns while discussions regarding a permanent solution continue.

Accordingly, I am advising the Town that, effective immediately, the unapproved access between Bennett Avenue and the Trans-Canada Highway will be closed. This access was never approved by the Department. Its construction and operation without the required approvals are contrary to the ***Building Near Highways Regulations*** under the ***Works, Services and Transportation Act*** and the ***Protected Road Zoning Regulations*** under the ***Urban and Rural Planning Act, 2000***. The Department will proceed with measures necessary to prevent traffic from utilizing this unauthorized access.

I want to emphasize that the Department remains willing to work collaboratively with the Town to identify and implement a permanent solution that addresses future development needs while ensuring the safety of the travelling public. However, until such a solution is agreed upon and implemented, the unauthorized Bennett Avenue access will remain closed.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Department officials remain available to continue discussions with the Town on a long-term resolution.

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Newfoundland & Labrador

Sincerely,

HON. BARRY PETTEN, MHA
Deputy Premier
Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure
District of Conception Bay South

"The safe way is the only way."

cc. Hon. Tony Wakeham, Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador
Hon. Mike Goosney, MHA for the District of Humber-Gros Morne
Hon. Lloyd Parrott, Minister of Government Services
Carol Anstey, MP for the Long Range Mountains

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