



Alberta Fire Chiefs Association

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MEDIA STATEMENT

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Alberta Fire Chiefs Association (AFCA) Expresses Disappointment Over Amendments to Bill 5's Safety Provisions and Lack of Consultation

Edmonton, Alberta – The Alberta Fire Chiefs Association (AFCA) wishes to voice its deep disappointment and concern regarding recent amendments made to the safety provisions introduced by Bill 5, pertaining to the requirement for drivers to reduce speed when passing emergency services attending to a scene. As an organization committed to the safety and well-being of both emergency responders and the general public, the AFCA finds these changes to be of significant concern.

The initial version of Bill 5, which proposed amendments to the Traffic Safety Act, represented a substantial step forward in augmenting road safety and ensuring the protection of the lives of those who diligently respond to emergencies. The AFCA appreciated the comprehensive nature of the original legislation, which mandated that all drivers in lanes moving in the same direction slow down to a speed of 60 kilometres per hour when passing an emergency vehicle displaying flashing lights. This stipulation was particularly critical on two-lane highways, where drivers were required to adhere to the same reduced speed in both directions.

However, the AFCA is now disheartened to learn of the modifications that were announced on Tuesday by the Honourable Devin Dreeshen, Minister of Transportation and Economic Corridors. Effective September 1, the amendments will exclusively apply to drivers in the lane nearest to the roadside emergency services. The rationale behind this change is not readily apparent, and it raises concerns about the potential compromise of safety measures that were previously deemed necessary.

What is particularly concerning is the lack of consultation with the Alberta Fire Chiefs Association regarding these amendments. The AFCA, as the unified voice of fire chiefs throughout the province, has a deep-rooted commitment to promoting effective communication, collaboration, and best practices within the fire and emergency response community. The absence of consultation undermines the vital role that the AFCA plays in ensuring the safety of our communities and the efficacy of emergency response operations.

In this regard, we are united with the Alberta Motor Association in questioning this move by the Province. The AFCA, dedicated to an approach grounded in data and evidence, has written to the Honourable Devin Dreeshen, Minister of Transportation and Economic Corridors, seeking transparency in the decision-making process underlying these amendments. In light of this modification to the safety provisions of Bill 5, the AFCA respectfully requests access to the study or factual information that informed this change. Our objective is to comprehensively understand the reasoning that led to altering the original legislation and to ensure that any amendments made are aligned with the fundamental goal of preserving lives and prioritizing the safety of emergency responders and the public.

The AFCA recognizes the significance of road safety enhancements and remains committed to engaging in constructive dialogue with the relevant authorities. Our intention is to collaborate to maintain secure roads and uphold the well-being of those on the front lines of emergency response and the general public.

For media inquiries, please contact:

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About the Alberta Fire Chiefs Association (AFCA)

The Alberta Fire Chiefs Association (AFCA) serves as the unified voice of fire chiefs throughout the province. Committed to advancing public safety, the AFCA strives to promote effective communication, collaboration, and best practices within the fire and emergency response community.