



Deb Matthews

London North Centre

Dear Jeffrey,

Thank you for your letter and for your commitment to accessibility for Ontarians. I welcome the opportunity to share the progress we've made to create an accessible Ontario by 2025, and to share our plans for the future.

Ontario Liberals continue to fully support the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) and its goals. We have created enforceable standards including customer service, information and communications, transportation, built environment and employment. In January 2013, the Liberal government appointed the Accessibility Standards Advisory Council/Standards Development Committee, chaired by Jim Sanders, former President and CEO of CNIB, to advise the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment. Specifically, the Council will review Ontario's existing accessibility standards and develop new accessibility standards. The Committee is currently reviewing the Customer Service Standard.

Over the past few years, the Liberal government has made a number of changes in the way we approach accessibility issues and have strengthened the implementation of the AODA, including moving the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario to the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Employment with its own dedicated Assistant Deputy Minister. This will encourage collaboration between the public and private sector to improve accessibility standard awareness, underline Ontario's commitment to ensuring businesses comply with AODA standards, and work together to explore new standards that will make Ontario the most accessible and inclusive region in the world.

To aid organizations in carrying out the AODA objectives, a number of sector-specific tools and resources have been developed to support businesses in meeting the requirements of the accessibility standards. As an example, through our Enabling Change Program, we partner with umbrella organizations to educate an industry or sector as to their obligations to comply with Ontario's accessibility standards.

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The Ontario Liberal Party is dedicated to pursuing compliance and enforcement action to bring more private sector organizations into compliance with AODA. To speak to our track record, 99 per cent of Designated Broader Public Sector Organizations have submitted their reports by the deadline to date. If I am elected, we are committed that this becomes 100 per cent.

We will ensure that organizations that fail to comply with AODA requirements are met with monetary penalties and be subjected to prosecution where necessary. Under the Liberal government, we issued the first monetary penalties. Ontario Liberals are committed to using all enforcement provisions under the AODA to ensure that organizations that do not comply with the law are penalized and to encourage compliance. To date, we have issued over 500 Notices of Director's Orders and we will continue to send more out monthly. Paired with enforcement activities, we are actively reaching out to businesses and not-for-profit organizations to help them understand and follow their obligations under the AODA.

With respect to additional enforcement activities, we commit to investigating the possibility of having government inspectors and investigators enforce the AODA within the context of existing resources and as training capacity exists.

The Ontario Liberal Party is committed to a fully accessible Ontario by 2025. This is important work and we need to make sure it is done right. Our pride stems from our most recent accomplishments in which five accessibility standards became law under the AODA.

Sincerely,

Deb Matthews

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