



Ontario Association of the Deaf

Working together to ensure a better future for Deaf Ontarians.



November 25, 2011

Hon Kathleen O. Wynne
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
17th Floor
777 Bay Street
Toronto, Ontario
M5G 2E5

Re: Mandatory Audible Alarm Device

Dear Hon Kathleen O. Wynne

Please allow me to say congratulations in your new role as the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and as the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs on October 20, 2011. You will be great for doing your job in Ontario.

OAD had the Annual General Meeting on November 12, 2011. The members raised their concerns about fire alarms and shared the news with us about some recent happenings in Ontario. They made a motion for OAD to draft a new position paper. It is called "mandatory audible alarm device that is designed to sound an alarm". I have taken action and drawn up the position paper. I am enclosing it for you to read.

OAD allows me express my concern, shared by a growing number of people in Ontario regarding smoke detectors and carbon monoxide alarms in all residential and commercial units across Ontario, realizing that they do not include a strobe light component. It has already resulted in serious issues.

OAD is advocating that **direct-wired smoke alarms with strobe light** must be installed in all homes.

We acknowledge that the Canadian Hearing Society has been advocating to the Ontario government for several years regarding visual fire alarms. We received the letter from the Canadian Hearing Society (dated November 17, 2011) and they are concerned about the same issues. OAD is not seeking funding or selling the devices to Deaf and non deaf citizens. We are focusing on direct-wired smoke alarms with strobe light as mandatory for the safety of all citizens.

I'm hoping that you are aware of both the Ontario Building Code and Ontario Fire Code requiring the installation of direct-wired smoke alarms in residential occupancies. By definition, a smoke alarm must sound an audible alarm to alert the home's occupants. Unfortunately, an audible alarm may not alert an individual who is Deaf, Deafened or Hard of Hearing.

It is my understanding that any change to the self-government or independence of Ontario is a lawful change, and as such must be submitted to the Ontario Building Code and Ontario Fire Code. If there is no legal requirement for direct-wired smoke alarms with a strobe light, this certainly is not

addressing safety for Deaf, deafened, and hard of hearing citizens. Yet, no discussion of the Ontario Building Code and Ontario Fire Code or its implications has been brought before the Ontarian citizens. Why is this? By what reasoning can this be considered a democratic process?

If the government is concerned this is unaffordable for residents, then perhaps the Government would consider a tax rebate incentive to upgrade to the strobe light hard-wire alarm device similar to the Rebate for Renovations and other programs.

OAD would like to suggest that you make a proposal to your government (or provide guidance to OAD on a Private Bill) that the Ontario Building Code and Ontario Fire Code require the installation of direct-wired smoke alarms with strobe light in residential occupancies.

Please feel free to contact me to discuss this in the best interest of safety for all Ontario citizens.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dean Walker', written in a cursive style.

Dean Walker
Executive Director
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deafdean@bell.blackberry.net

CC. President Jackie Plant
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