

Description of Policy:

The Ontario Ministry of Transportation is examining how people travel between communities by intercity bus in this province. This important, new work will focus on scheduled intercity bus services that operate between separate communities. This differs from local bus services (i.e., public transit) which generally operate within communities. The province has rules and regulations that govern how intercity buses operate in Ontario, including the Public Vehicles Act, Ontario Regulation 982 and the Ontario Highway Transport Board Act.

The ministry is considering different ways of modernizing these rules and regulations in order to both increase the number of intercity bus users and to improve the overall intercity bus traveling experience. Input is being sought from the general public on their perceptions of and experiences with travelling by intercity bus, as well as, from the intercity bus operators on how intercity bus services can be improved. The information being collected will be used as one part of the ministry's evaluation process on how to modernize intercity bus services in Ontario.

This work will also inform the ministry's work on the Northern Ontario Multimodal Transportation Strategy. The Strategy will consider intercity bus transportation as it identifies the transportation issues and needs that are unique to Northern Ontario for the movement of people and goods over the next 25 years.

Purpose of Policy:

The purpose of developing recommendations on modernizing and appropriately regulating the intercity bus regime is to ensure it remains an attractive and affordable travel option for Ontarians. It is anticipated that, in addition to more efficiently connecting communities, if the intercity bus mode becomes a more viable alternative to the single-occupant passenger vehicle, it may also help to manage congestion in more urbanized areas.

Other Information:

To help guide the development of recommendations on modernizing intercity bus services, the province is seeking feedback on the questions below. The questions are organized based on your experience with intercity buses. Please answer the questions under the heading that best applies to you.

I travel on intercity buses

1. Why do you take the bus instead of another mode of transportation (e.g., personal vehicle, plane, train, etc.)?
2. Please describe a typical intercity bus trip for you, for example:
 - name of the intercity bus provider;
 - frequency (how often do you take the bus);
 - distance;
 - purpose;
 - number of people travelling; and/or
 - other.
3. What do you like the most/least about intercity bus services in your community?
4. Please specify the location of your community.
5. What changes to intercity bus service, if any, would encourage you to take the bus more frequently (e.g., better connections, online services, etc.)?

I do not travel on intercity buses

1. What prevents you from using intercity bus services (e.g., cost, inconvenience, general perception of intercity bus travel, other, etc.)?
2. What changes to intercity bus service, if any, would encourage you to take the bus?
3. If a regularly scheduled bus service were to be set up to a community you travel to frequently, how likely would you be to use it?
4. Please specify the location of your community and the desired destination(s).

I am an intercity bus operator

1. Do you have future plans to expand services and/or make changes to your business model? Please specify.
2. What, if anything, has prevented you from implementing new services and/or attempting new business models?
3. What changes would improve the intercity bus operating environment in Ontario?

OPTIONAL:

Do you have any other comments on intercity bus service that are not covered above that you would like to share with the ministry at this time?

Public Consultation:

This proposal has been posted for a 60 day public review and comment period starting July 27, 2015. If you have any questions, or would like to submit your comments, please do so by September 25, 2015 to the individual listed under "Contact". Additionally, you may submit your comments on-line.

All comments received prior to September 25, 2015 will be considered as part of the decision-making process by the Ministry if they are submitted in writing or electronically using the form provided in this notice and reference EBR Registry number 012-4351.

Please Note: All comments and submissions received will become part of the public record. You will not receive a formal response to your comment, however, relevant comments received as part of the public participation process for this proposal will be considered by the decision maker for this proposal.

Other Public Consultation Opportunities:

In accordance with its Statement of Environmental Values, the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) believes that public consultation is critical to sound decision making. The travelling public, the intercity bus industry and other interested groups and individuals across Ontario are invited to submit written comments regarding consideration of different ways to modernize the rules and regulations governing the intercity bus regime. Alternatively, you may submit your comments online. Please quote the Environmental Registry Number when submitting comments.

You will not receive a formal response to your comments, however, all comments received during the posting of this proposal will be taken into consideration by MTO in developing recommendations on modernizing and appropriately regulating the province's intercity bus regime.

If you have any questions, or would like to submit your comments, please do so by XXXX to the individual listed under "Contact." Additionally, you may submit your comments online.

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