



555 BURNHAMTHORPE ROAD, SUITE 505, ETOBICOKE, ONTARIO M9C 2Y3
(416) 229-6622 FAX (416) 229-6281 E-mail: info@omca.com Internet: http://www.omca.com

May 25, 2011

Mayor Rob Ford
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West
2nd Floor
Toronto, ON
M5H 2N2

Dear Mayor,

The Ontario Motor Coach Association (OMCA) is a full-service trade association representing 80 bus operators, over 100 tour operators and over 700 affiliated sellers to the group tour industry including attractions, destinations, hotels, and retail outlets across North America. Our operator members provide scheduled intercity, charter, tour, school bus, contract, shuttle, airport and transit services.

Our members as well as motor coach companies from outside of Ontario that are non-members are extremely concerned over Toronto's strict bus parking bylaws and stiff fines which discriminate against buses. Toronto works hard and invests in measures to promote Toronto as a tourist destination, however, when a motor coach is ticketed \$300 when attempting to pick up or drop off a group at a downtown Toronto venue or hotel, it sends the wrong message to tour operators and bus companies about Toronto.

A few years ago, City Council approved a parking fine increase that saw the penalty for illegally parking, stopping or standing a bus jump to **\$300**. This compares to a maximum fine of just \$60 for other commercial vehicles, trucks and cars. If that's not discrimination we don't know what is.

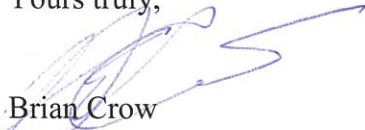
Not only does a \$300 fine deter tour operators and bus companies from bringing groups to Toronto, it can mean more congestion if fewer groups travel to Toronto by motor coach and instead travel in by car. If Toronto wants more tourism and people to travel by bus and leave their cars at home, it should be looking for ways to entice bus companies to bring groups downtown, not drive them away with huge fines that discriminate against them. It has been estimated that one motor coach day-trip to downtown Toronto generates \$3,000 in economic activity for the City, and for an overnight stay, between \$7,000 to \$12,000 in economic activity.

We appreciate that parking enforcement is needed on certain streets at certain times to ensure a safe and efficient flow of traffic, but what we have trouble accepting is a fine that's five times greater than the fine a tractor trailer would get if parked illegally. As we see it, the bus fine should be the same if not lower than that for other vehicle types.

We have been told by some OMCA bus operator members they will factor the possibility of getting a \$300 fine in their decision as to whether they will continue to offer day charter trips to attractions in Toronto. It is also a factor when discussing hotel options for tour groups. As one charter bus company said recently, "There's not enough margin for us in a day trip from Kitchener or Guelph to the theatre in Toronto if we run the risk of a \$300 fine when picking up our group after the theatre gets out, so we seriously have to consider other attractions outside of downtown Toronto." None of us want that to happen.

We ask that you direct staff to investigate this matter and put an end to this discriminatory and unfair practice that is giving Toronto a bad name in the travel and tour industry across Ontario and beyond. Toronto, with a few policy changes can change its image of being "motor coach unfriendly" to a "motor coach friendly" destination.

Yours truly,



Brian Crow
President

c.c. David Whitaker, President and CEO, Tourism Toronto