



Society of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Nova Scotians

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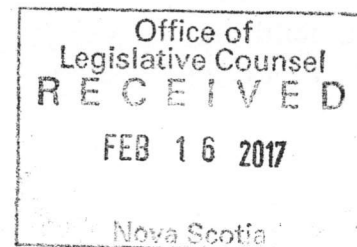
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www.sdhhns.org

"...to meet the needs of the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Late Deafened with dignity, integrity, and respect"

February 9th, 2017

Office of Legislative Counsel
CIBC Building
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Halifax NS B3J 2X1



Re: Bill 59 (Accessibility Act)

Dear Members of the Law Amendments Committee,

I am writing in regards to Bill 59, the new NS accessibility legislation. I would like to commend the Government for bringing forward the accessibility Legislation. When the legislation is passed Nova Scotia will be only the third province in Canada that has an Accessibility or Disabilities Act.

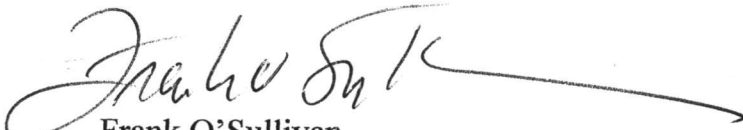
Over the past two years a lot of work has gone into developing the framework and content of the legislation. There have been extensive consultations all across the province which resulted in many excellent recommendations, a number of which have been incorporated into the legislation

However, the legislation as it currently exists has a number of flaws that undermine its ability to remove barriers and ensure full access for all Nova Scotians. The areas we feel need revision include the following; a need to ensure the legislation applies public and private services, facilities, transportation and communication; there needs to be clear and meaningful deadlines for implementation of the legislation. It is crucial that the members of the disability community are involved and provide a leadership role in all stages of the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of standards under the Act. There should be a clear process for accepting and investigating complaints under the Act and enforcing compliance. Government should use its purchasing power for goods and services to ensure compliance with the Act. It is important that the Government take a very active and creative role in providing incentives and supports to remove barriers and ensure accessibility

Many Nova Scotians with a hearing loss experience a range of barriers in their daily lives. Bill 59, when eventually passed, will go a long way to reducing those barriers and increasing access for everyone. However for the Law to work in the spirit it was intended it is imperative that certain sections need to be revised.

Nova Scotia has the ability to become a model for equality and access, not just across Canada, but around the world. Let us seize the opportunity.

Yours sincerely,



Frank O'Sullivan
Executive Director



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**Frank O'Sullivan, Presentation to NS Law Amendments Committee
March 2nd, 2016**

Thank you for the opportunity to say a few words before the committee. I am here as a Deaf person, the Executive Director of Society of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Nova Scotians and as a member of the cross disability Bill 59 Community Alliance.

I would like to commend the Government for bringing forward the accessibility legislation. When the legislation is passed Nova Scotia will be only the third province in Canada that has an Accessibility or Disabilities Act.

Over the past two years a lot of work has gone into developing the framework and content of the legislation. There have been extensive consultations all across the province which resulted in many excellent recommendations, a number of which have been incorporated into the legislation

However I believe that the legislation as it currently exists has a number of flaws that undermine its ability to remove barriers and ensure full access for all Nova Scotians. I know that many of the areas of concern and recommendations for revision to the Bill have already been conveyed to the Law Amendments Committee by a number of other individuals and organizations so I will refrain from going into detail.

However I strongly believe for the legislation to work in the spirit it was intended it should apply as broadly as possible in our society. There should be clear and meaningful deadlines for implementation, the government should take a very active and creative role in providing incentives and support to remove barriers and ensure accessibility. It is also crucial that the members of the disability community are involved in, and provide a leadership role in all stages of the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of standards under the Act.

As with many other Deaf and hard of hearing Nova Scotians I experience a range of barriers in daily life, I have also been fortunate to witness the positive impact on one's quality of life when barriers are removed and I can experience a measure of the access that others take for granted. This has included having access to sign language interpreters, closed captioning, information in digital format and Communication Access Real Time Translation (CART).

Bill 59, when eventually passed, will go a long way to reducing those barriers and increasing access for everyone. We have the ability to become a model for access not just across Canada but around the world. However it is imperative that we take a little more time to revise the legislation. To paraphrase Mike Holmes of Holmes on Homes "We need to Make it Right"

Thank you for your time.