

January 28, 2010

Mr. Jim Burns
Warden of Lambton County, and
Lambton County Councilors
Wyoming, Ontario N0N 1T0



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Dear Warden Burns and Councilors:

During the collection of public input in 2008, the Chamber made its thoughts known on the preliminary truck use of County Roads study.

Position:

We remain convinced that County government has an obligation to provide a competitive road system and one that promotes economic sustainability and growth. With this in mind, our opinion was that local use defined as option 1 was the best option for all county roads.

Messaging:

Restricting trucks sends a message of restricting business efficiency, profitability and jobs. Restrictive actions do not send the right message to the business community-those that are here and those that may want to locate here.

As taxpayers, business pays about 27% of County taxes. Residential tax payments account for about 68% and they would not have the ability to pay this without the jobs business provides. Business needs to be assured that local government supports their important role as partner with government to improve the economy and well-being of those living in Lambton County.

The Chamber represents 1,031 businesses that employ about 19,000 persons. It may be hard to visualize, but when I present to you in Council Chambers I am only one person, but represent this very large group of businesses and taxpayers.

Bylaw Enforcement:

We attended an informal January 11, 2010 meeting of stakeholders on the issue of Lakeshore Road, and an OPP representative told us they would enforce the resulting bylaw. He stated that the only way they can really enforce a future bylaw is to stop a truck and look at the bill of lading. With many matters in their daily routine to enforce, restrictions made by Council on trucks will be most difficult for police to obtain your desired outcome.

Lakeshore Road:

We agree there were trucks using Lakeshore Road that should not have. However, option 1 would eliminate these in-transit trucks from the north and the USA. We fully support the re-direction of USA bound, etc. in-transit trucks to highway 402/21. The suggestion made that trucks were using Lakeshore Road to bypass the weigh scales is not true. Lorne Reynolds at MTO tells us that they closed the 402 westbound weigh scales as much as three years ago. The OPP officer we met with also said they did not find this to be the reason trucks were on Lakeshore Road.

The Collective Voice of Business

Lakeshore Road and Option 3:

At recent meetings of Council option 3 for Lakeshore Road was the preferred option. We do not support option 3 because it adds the most cost and lessens efficiency of business and will be the most difficult to achieve the desired result. For example, under option 3 trucks with delivery or pick-up (or simply trying to get back home at night) at a location on a north-south road near Lakeshore Road, but not on Lakeshore Road, would have to go the long-way on highway 21 and highway 402 to get there. They can not use Lakeshore Road as an in-transit route to another location even if going home at night. Further, a delivery in Lambton Shores on Lakeshore Road, say Indian Hills golf course, could not use Lakeshore Road to get to a business in Plympton-Wyoming that is off Lakeshore Road, like Bonnie Doon Golf course. They too would have to find a route that uses highway 21/402. This is not efficient. Finally, under option 3 the greatest amount of restrictions would be in place and as mentioned earlier, bylaw enforcement would be the most difficult to achieve the desired results.

Lakeshore Road and Option 2:

Some business efficiencies may still be achieved on Lakeshore Road if Council went no further than selecting option 2, permitting truck use on delivery or pick-up to and through any municipality along Lakeshore Road. This would eliminate all USA, etc. in-transit trucks, and those trucks with deliveries/pick-ups beyond a Lakeshore Road municipality. For this option, some business efficiency would be maintained because Lakeshore Road could be used to access any delivery/pick-up point in Sarnia, Plympton-Wyoming and Lambton Shores. Further, option 2 would not send every truck through Forest.

Balance of report:

With respect to the balance of the report, we support staff recommendations and option 1 local use. As an example, in Petrolia, we firmly support an informal approach by staff to demonstrate another way for some truck companies to get where they need to go and not use Petrolia Line. However, an outright ban is not acceptable as alternate roads are not satisfactory for truck use.

Summary:

We respectfully request Council approve option 1 for County roads as originally recommended by staff in the road study and approve no more restrictions than under option 2 for Lakeshore Road only.

Thank you for considering our position on this matter.

Sincerely;



Garry McDonald
President

c.c. Katherine Walker, Board Chair

Doug Lasenby and Ken Graham, Co Chairs Transportation Committee