

MEDIA RELEASE. April 24, 2023

RESOLUTION TO THE PROVINCE TO REDUCE DEATHS ON HIGHWAY 6 SUPPORTED BY NORTHERNERS

The **Safer Highway 6 Citizens Action Group** recently submitted a letter to the Minister of Transportation with a resolution that was adopted and supported by northern Manitoba towns, First Nations, and Chambers of Commerce as a follow-up to their petition last year.

The resolution (attached) requests the Minister to
*1) outline & implement a five year Highway 6 Road Improvement Program as per recommendations and iRAP.org standards presented on May 12, 2022, and
2) to submit these plans to the signatories by June 1, 2023.*

Resolutions were approved by the Town of Churchill, Town of Flin Flon, Town of The Pas, Tataskweyak Cree Nation, Town of Snow Lake, Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation, Town of Grand Rapids, and the Chambers of Commerce of Flin Flon and Thompson.

On May 12, 2022, the **Safer Highway 6 Citizens Action Group** of people from four communities met with Minister Doyle Piwniuk of the Department of Infrastructure and Transportation in Winnipeg. They presented a petition of 6250 names and a brief to advocate for a **Safer Highway 6** from Winnipeg to Thompson. As the 750 km highway is the primary transportation corridor to Thompson, *the Hub of the North*, it serves northern Manitoba and the many small communities and First Nations along the way. The northern region includes over 70,000 residents plus countless tourists and visitors each year. The brief outlined how dangerous Highway 6 is to drive in winter and included photos and a long list of accident victims.

Moving freight is an important and essential service to the North. However, high numbers of semi and double length trailer traffic every day make driving in winter risky, dangerous, and nerve wracking for most travellers. Manitoba Public Insurance shows an average of 40 accidents a month that result in roll overs, collisions, and fatal head-on accidents. The cost of personal injury, vehicle damage, hospitalization, police and emergency resources has never been documented, but is substantial.

It is very stressful for Northern drivers when it takes 8-12 hours to drive the route to Winnipeg in winter when it can be extremely cold and dark by 5 pm, and people have an important medical appointment or a plane to catch in Winnipeg for holidays. Often, sport teams have to cancel their participation in tournaments when parents are hesitant

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and scared to drive these lengths. More so, there are 100s of kilometres where there are no rest stops or public toilet facilities that should be essential services provided by the Province.

#SaferHighway6 Citizens Action Group is not aligned with any political party. Northern towns and Chambers will continue to monitor and strongly advocate for highway safety improvements this year and beyond. Further strong actions will be forthcoming if safety features such as wider shoulders, passing lanes, a 2+1 lane system, stronger cell service, and rest stops are not implemented in the next few years.

The Highway 6 brief recommended a list of actions for road improvements that can reduce accidents, injuries, and deaths if Manitoba followed www.iRAP.org international standards for safety that other countries have adopted. Sweden has reduced highway accidents by nearly 70% by implementing the 2+1 lane system. For the benefit of all northern towns, the Citizen's Action Group would like to see the plan to adopt those standards and the work necessary to ensure safety. They are willing to strongly recognize government for moving in that direction.

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#SaferHighway6 Citizens Action Group

CONTACT INFO

Volker Beckmann, Thompson, Cell 204 679 5194

Brenda Redman, Winnipeg, Cell 204 679 1906

Bev Rolsky, Thompson, Cell 204 296 3803

Linda Markus, The Pas

Steven Crooks, Thompson

Bonnie Linklater, Nisichawaysihk Cree Nation