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January 13, 2010

Minister Bill Estabrooks  
1492 St.Margaret's Bay Road  
Lakeside NS  
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Dear Minister,

We have been asked by a group of Automotive Service and Repair business owners throughout the province to communicate to you the views of the Retail Gasoline Dealers Association (R.G.D.A.) relative to the Motor Vehicle Inspection (MVI) program.

The group of business owners I refer to are headed by Ms. Mildred Hebb, Hebb's Auto Service Ltd., Kempt Rd in Halifax, a well known and respected automotive service and repair center.

Essentially the issue relates to the circumstances surrounding last year's change to the MVI inspection period from one year to two years and growing industry interest in a recommendation to reverse that decision. The decision to change the inspection period requirement was made by the previous government without notice or consultation with the Industry. We believe this unexpected change was a result, in large part, from negative media coverage concerning a frustrated motorists' experience with the inspection process.

We were very disappointed when we learned of the change as there was absolutely no discussion or opportunity to comment from the R.G.D.A. in spite of the fact that the Association has had such a long historical connection to this program. The R.G.D.A. actively supported the introduction of a compulsory Annual M.V.I. program implemented on January 1, 1967 as well as the changes to the program since then.

In March of last year the changes to the M.V.I. program prompted several Industry Associations to come together to better understand the implications that may result from these changes. Attending the meetings were myself, John Sutherland, NS Automobile Dealers Association, Rui Martins, Canadian Tire, Roy McNeill, RGDA Director, Corey Miller, Miller Tire, Atlantic Tire Dealers and Service Nova Scotia's Patrick O'Malley and William Lounds.

The concern of the group was related not only to the manner in which the change occurred but also the likely reduction in vehicle repairs and ultimately levels of safety. The unexpected

changes to the M.V.I. program left hundreds of inspection stations throughout the province unprepared to communicate the impact to their customers. Many M.V.I. inspection stations expressed concern over the inevitable shock consumers would receive for repair costs estimates on vehicles after two years of driving without an inspection.

While an inspection every 2 years may now be legal, it is generally regarded as not adequate for vehicles 5 years old or more. The 2007 Automotive Industries Association of Canada Outlook Study indicated the average age of vehicles in Nova Scotia was 8 years old and rising.

While in theory an argument could be made that new vehicles may not have the same inspection requirements, there has always been the issue of recalls, faults, damage and defects that negatively affect safety of newer vehicles which would not be noticed until an inspection takes place.

Mr. Minister, our purpose in writing is to express complete support for the Automotive business group recommending reinstatement of an annual M.V.I. inspection and to once again emphasize the important safety considerations at stake.

We hope this information is helpful and we appreciate the opportunity to comment on this important issue.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Graham', written in a cursive style.

Graham Conrad  
Executive Director

GC/nb