

Proposed Motion:

Councillor Christina Bisanz, Ward 7

Request to the Province of Ontario to implement School Bus Stop-Arm Camera Regulations to increase student safety in the Town of Newmarket

Background

Newmarket currently has approximately 100 school buses that drop off and pick up children from their homes to school, and back. Children are at their most vulnerable while they are boarding or exiting their school bus. Ensuring their safety while they do so is paramount.

For over 30 years now, school buses have been using flashing lights and stop arms that warn drivers of all vehicles to stop within 20 meters of the school bus. This law applies to both sides of the road unless there is a median dividing the road. All vehicles must stop regardless of which side of the road they are on while the stop arm is deployed. This law is a provincial offense governed by the Highway Traffic Act under subsection 175 (11) or (12). The fines range from \$400 to \$2,000.

However, due to a lack of resources for enforcement, vehicles “blow by” school buses on a daily basis with no concern for our children’s safety, regardless of the flashing lights and deployed stop arms. This is caused by a lack of attention to the road or a total ignorance of the law.

In December of 2017, an omnibus bill - Bill 174, Cannabis, Smoke-Free Ontario and Road Safety Statute Law Amendment Act, 2017 was adopted by the Province of Ontario. Bill 174 includes School Bus Camera legislation. At the present time, however, the regulations which would govern school bus cameras have not been written. The Ministry of Transportation of Ontario (MTO) needs to hear from municipalities such as ours to expedite the writing of these regulations, and bring school bus cameras into action.

To ensure we keep our children safe when they board or exit a school bus, which is an extension of a school zone, I request that:

The Town of Newmarket send a letter to the Ontario Minister of Transportation, the Honourable John Yakabuski, to develop policy and regulations to enforce stop arm infractions and keep our children who use school buses, safe.