



Kevin Flynn, President
1 709 728 4926
president@bnl.nf.ca

Sherry Gambin-Walsh
Minister Service Newfoundland and Labrador
P.O. 8700
St. John's, NL
A1B 4J6

Dear Minister Gambin-Walsh,

On December 23rd, 2016, Ellen Watters was training on her bicycle in New Brunswick. She was 23 years old at the time, and a rising star in the sport of cycling. Unfortunately, Ellen would never reach her full potential in cycling or in life, as she was involved in a tragic collision with a vehicle. Four days later she would succumb to her injuries.

The local response to this tragedy was swift. Within days, concerned citizens were lobbying the provincial government for necessary changes. The process for creating safe spaces on New Brunswick's roadways remains ongoing to this day but thankfully, in the immediate aftermath (less than two months after the fatal collision), "Ellen's Law" was passed. The new law prohibits drivers from passing anyone travelling on their bicycle in the same direction, unless there is at least one meter of open space between the vehicle and the bicycle.

Failure to provide room for cyclists will result in a fine. The intention is to promote and encourage a much safer environment for everyone on our roads.

While this new legislation was created too late for Ellen, this law will undoubtedly save lives in the future. The law would be similar to those already in place in Ontario, Quebec and Nova Scotia. Prince Edward Island has recently adopted it as well. It is time Newfoundland and Labrador did the same.

In our province, we have had our own share of encounters between bicycles and motor vehicles, some of which have been fatal. We at Bicycle Newfoundland and Labrador are constantly hearing stories of near-misses and aggression. Our membership often say they do not feel safe or welcome on our roads. There is no one reason for any of these instances, but they do occur. We believe that adopting a similar practice to Ellen's Law in this province will bring us one step -- or pedal-stroke -- closer to safer commuting for everyone, regardless of how they travel.

We call on you, the Minister in charge of Service NL, along with other leaders of our province, to take proactive measures and begin the appropriate process to create new and similar legislation to protect the travelling public. We, the Board of Directors for Bicycle Newfoundland and Labrador, ask this on behalf of our 300+ members, as well as everyone else in the province who wish to see safer roads.

If you would like to discuss this any further, we are available to meet at your convenience.

Thanking you in advance for your consideration,

Kevin Flynn, President

Bicycle Newfoundland and Labrador.

Cc: Dwight Ball, Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador

Eddie Joyce, Minister for Municipal Affairs and Environment

Lisa Dempster, Minister for Children, Seniors and Social Development

Paul Davis, Leader of the Official Opposition

Lorraine Michael, Leader of the New Democratic Party

Paul Lane, Independent Member of the House of Assembly