

September 4, 2019

Don Wright, Board Chair
Metrolinx
97 Front Street West
Toronto, ON M5J 1E6

Dear Mr. Wright:

Please accept this correspondence as my formal comments to the Board of Directors of Metrolinx regarding recently enacted policies.

I have been a regular commuter on the GO train service for more than 30 years and would like to share some views from that perspective.

Specifically, my comments are with regard to the recently implemented changes as part of the 'Revenue Protection' presented at the board meeting in May 2019 by Mr. George Bell.

As part of 'Revenue Protection', Metrolinx has implemented a 'zero tolerance' program with regard to fare discrepancies.

I would like to express my concern that I believe that this policy implementation has lacked in oversight and consideration both with regard to fair treatment of customers and the collateral affects with regard to the resolution of disputes with the provincial court system.

Having experienced unwarranted inconvenience at the hands of this policy, on principal, I must directly communicate with those responsible in the event that there may be community silence with regard to poorly implemented services within the province.

I have reviewed the Memorandum from George Bell to the Board of Directors dated May 15, 2019 and taken the time to view the live board discussion on the matter and the representation and answers provided to the board by Mr. Bell.

With the Removal of discretion from fare officers as part of 'zero tolerance' for ticket variances (many caused by poorly working, or poorly instructed equipment), Metrolinx has been granted unfair leverage against its customers. I expect that customers will not view this as 'fare is fair' and both customers and transit staff will find little joy in encounters that will increasingly result from this policy.

Based on discussions with GO compliance, it sounds like the backlog of reviews by officers of the Provincial court have further incited customers to unhappily pay unwarranted fines. Next available times for judicial review are in 2020.

Mr. Bell discussed presumptive misrepresentations like 'my dog ate it' as commonplace defences and hinted at the possibility of racism and gender discrimination in the enforcement ranks as justifications for hard enforcement with no nuance. I suspect that Metrolinx has some better statistics on these matters and has chosen not to present an evidence based argument.

Mr. Bell stated, I believe, that 40% of fines are challenged by passengers. I think Mr. Bell also stated that in recent history 45% of fare encounters resulted in a warning by the enforcement officer. With zero tolerance, these now flow directly into compliance fine collection, provincial courts and collection agencies. Furthermore, Mr. Bell stated that some sort of warning still continues with 'some passengers' which seems counter to the zero tolerance policy that was conveyed to me.

I would challenge the statement that zero tolerance has led to a positive reaction by customers. In my opinion he means there is a positive reaction by the compliance office at Metrolinx.

Here are my main thoughts for your consideration:

1. Customers will experience more unwarranted fines and inconvenience challenging unwarranted fines. Metrolinx has no incentive to improve the fare machinery, as confusing and ineffective machinery will allow them to extract more fines.
2. The provincial court system has not been involved in the process and will not respond to the increase demand for hearings in defence of fines. What is the true cost/benefit, both financially and to customer good will?

Sincerely,

Matthew Bailey

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



Office of the Chair
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September 17, 2019

Matthew Bailey
[REDACTED]

Via Email: [REDACTED]

Dear Matthew,

Thank you for your letter to the Metrolinx Board of Directors regarding our fare enforcement policy.

As noted in the memorandum to the Metrolinx Board of Directors, dated May 15, 2019, with respect to revenue protection, Metrolinx loses approximately \$5 million dollars for every 1% evasion. Last year, Metrolinx lost approximately \$15 million through fare evasion. Reduction and recovery of this amount represents significant financial diligence and protects the taxpayer's investment in the system.

The vast majority of transit customers pay their fares. Unfortunately there will always be a small percentage of people who have not paid, which is why transit agencies establish fare enforcement systems and policies.

Metrolinx assessed how we can ensure fare evasion is kept minimal, while providing a consistent experience for all our customers. The outcome of our review is that Transit Safety and Revenue Protection Officers will no longer be issuing verbal or written warnings for those who are unable to show a valid fare when requested. Our zero tolerance policy is fair and consistent to everyone and will streamline the inspection process to keep up with increasing ridership across our system. However, this change should not alter in any way how our staff professionally interacts with customers.

Once customers have either boarded a train or entered a signed platform indicating that the customer is in a "fare paid zone," they are required to show the appropriate proof of payment in either an active PRESTO card, paper ticket or an e-ticket. Therefore, boarding a train or signed platform without these means that customers are subject to receiving a fine for not having done so.

The Metrolinx Administrative Fee program provides individuals with an alternative dispute resolution and hearing process, as opposed to a formal court setting (a trial). Everyone who receives a "Notice of Violation" has the same opportunity for review options and finally a hearing if they are unsatisfied.

Fare evasion, if not managed appropriately, can become a chronic problem that affects not only our ability to provide service, but ultimately our ability to keep transit affordable.

We value customer feedback, which is important to us as we continue to improve the customer experience and continue to expand services across the GO Transit system. Thank you for taking the time to share your concerns.

Warm regards,



Donald Wright
Chair