



Guy Bourgouin

MPP, Mushkegowuk - James Bay | Député, Mushkegowuk - Baie James

Queen's Park, June 24th, 2020

Hon. Caroline Mulroney,
Minister of Transportation
5th Floor, 777 Bay St.
Toronto, ON M7A 1Z8

RE: Re-opening of DriveTest Centres and Delays in Mushkegowuk-James Bay

Minister Mulroney,

I am writing to you today to share the concerns of many constituents of Mushkegowuk-James Bay who find themselves facing potential job and wage losses as well as missed recreational activities because of deplorable delays at the local DriveTest centres.

As mentioned in a Ministry of Transportation [announcement](#) dated June 18, 2020, following the gradual re-opening of DriveTest Centres on June 22nd, “Driver Examination services will be reintroduced in three phases until full services are restored this fall.”

Be that, however, as it may, the Kapuskasing DriveTest centre is pure and simply not at par to cope with the needs of our region. The centre employs **just two permanent staff**, whom are equally expected to deliver services at the Hearst DriveTest on a part-time basis. Services in the region have been stretched thin for years – with delays being an ongoing concern.

To add insult to injury, my office has been informed that the local DriveTest **remains closed** because of construction and its **opening times will be reduced** to a mere ten hours per week in Kapuskasing and one full day per week in Hearst. No doubt, this closure and reduction in service is appalling and will result in further delays, thereby forcing constituents on the Highway 11 corridor to travel long distances (between three and five hours) to the nearest centres in either Timmins or Thunder Bay.

These circumstances are particularly affecting young people who need to obtain their driver's license in order to travel to and from work. For example, Émilie Bourgelas, a young and bright student from Kapuskasing, holds a full-time summer job in order to save up enough money to attend law school in the Fall. Ms. Bourgelas booked her G2 test four months in advance and was expected to take the drive test last April. Her parents are both essential workers – her mother is a nurse at the local hospital and her father works for Hydro One – and, for that reason, are rarely able to drive her to work five days a week.

Minister, Ms. Bourgela's case is just one example among many young Ontarians in rural and remote regions who are professionally and financially affected by both the pandemic and the chronic under-staffing of Ontario's DriveTest centres.

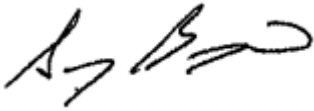
As you certainly know, the smaller and rural areas of Northern Ontario do not offer the public transit system that is available in the larger, urban areas of our province. Ms. Bourgelas cannot take the local transit system to go to work because there is **none**. She needs access to a vehicle to make a living, to earn money in order to pursue her career goals.

I am certain that the Ministry of Transportation and DriveTest wish to offer services while abiding by sound health and safety protocols. It is nonetheless difficult to understand how and why DriveTest introduces province-wide, blanket protocols when Ontario's Chief Medical Officer and the Ontario government are relying on regional measures.

I am thus kindly asking you to meet with me to discuss the chronic delays and under-staffing of the Kapuskasing DriveTest that is gravely affecting constituents of Mushkegowuk-James Bay like Ms. Bourgelas.

I look forward to a prompt response to my query.

Cordially,

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

Guy Bourgouin
MPP/député, Mushkegowuk-James Bay/Baie James

CC: MPP Jennifer French, Official Opposition Critic for Highways and Transportation.