



Media Release – For immediate release

Bikes belong in Ontario!

BTAC releases comprehensive policy program to promote cycling

(Toronto, Sept. 20, 2007) “Bikes Belong in Ontario,” a comprehensive policy program to promote bicycling, was released by the Bicycle Trade Association of Canada (BTAC) today. BTAC is calling for the provincial parties to adopt the program highlights of which include:

- Direct and dedicated funding to Ontario municipalities for increased bicycle infrastructure;
- Direct financial incentives to increase bicycle use and safe cycling;
- Provincial tax incentives for private sector employers to install bicycle parking, showers and other cycling specific amenities necessary for employees to cycle to work and encourage Ontario Public Service employees to cycle to work by providing similar access to cycling specific amenities;
- Direct and dedicated funding for youth cycling training and cycling awareness training for drivers; and
- Seed funding for the establishment of a not-for-profit organization to assist the province, Ontario municipalities and private sector employers in developing and implementing cycling policies and plans specifically related to increasing cycling transportation and recreational cycling in Ontario.

BTAC strongly supports the Liberal pledge to eliminate Ontario PST on bicycles and bicycle helmets and to invest in municipal cycling infrastructure. British Columbia has exempted bicycles and bicycle accessories from provincial sales tax for over twenty years.

“While the health benefits of bicycling are significant and a tax exemption on bicycles will encourage cycling, a tax exemption on helmets will encourage safe cycling,” said Dr. Charles Tator (University of Toronto, Toronto Western Hospital, Division of Neurosurgery) Founder of the ThinkFirst Foundation of Canada, adding, “As an organization dedicated to preventing brain and spinal cord injury through education, we like both the message it sends about riding as safely as possible and the financial incentive it provides to do so.”

“Bicycling, as a mode of transportation, addresses many important issues challenging Ontarians,” said Rob White, BTAC Vice-President. “We need to hear more from each of the political parties on bicycling.”

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Bicycle transportation is known to be the healthiest, most environmentally friendly and efficient means of urban transportation:

- A bicycle can cover a given distance using one-thousandth of the fuel and one-thousandth the greenhouse gases than does a typical car. Assuming only a 2% conversion of automobile trips to bicycle trips in Ontario, greenhouse gas emissions reductions would be in the order of 330,000 tonnes of CO₂e/year.
- Bicycling benefits the Ontario health care system by reducing the risk of serious conditions such as heart disease, high blood pressure, obesity and the most common form of diabetes.
- Bicycling transportation reduces urban congestion and pollutions contributing to smog.

-30-

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*The **Bicycle Trade Association of Canada (BTAC)** is the national voice of cycling in Canada and the hub of the Canadian bicycle industry. BTAC advocates, builds partnerships, promotes trade and commerce and seeks to motivate, unit and inspire Canadians to make bicycling the pre-eminent form of transportation and recreation in Canada. See www.btac.org for more information.*

*The **ThinkFirst Foundation of Canada** is a joint effort from not only neuroscience health professionals and educators, but also injury survivors, corporations, local businesses, and communities to prevent brain and spinal cord injury through education aimed at healthy behaviors in children and youth. See www.thinkfirst.ca for more information.*