

## News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 19, 2011

### Reduced Speed Limits Will Save Children's Lives

The Ecology Action Centre is calling on the Nova Scotia government to reduce speeds in school zones and child play areas to help make our streets safer for children and youth. Over 15 organizations, including the Nova Scotia Chiefs of Police Association and the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities, also support such a change in the Motor Vehicle Act.

The World Health Organization and UNICEF in their World Report on Child Injury Prevention (2008) recommend reducing speeds to 30 km/h in residential areas and around schools and play areas to protect pedestrians. Research shows that a pedestrian hit by a car going 50 km/h has an 80 percent chance of dying. When hit by a car going 30 km/h that chance drops dramatically to five percent.

"If this is what the research is saying, that reducing speeds will save lives and protect some of the most vulnerable members of society – our children – why wouldn't we do this?" asks Janet Barlow, Active & Safe Routes to School Coordinator of the Ecology Action Centre.

Speeding is one of the top complaints received by elected officials and police throughout the province. According to Active & Safe Routes to School, it is also one of the top barriers preventing parents from allowing their children to walk or cycle to school.

Currently in Nova Scotia, the school zone speed limit is 50 km/h. The Ecology Action Centre proposes reducing the speed to 30 km/h in areas where the speed limit is already 50 km/h. It is not proposing this change for areas where the regular speed limit is more than 50 km/h. Other provinces, such as BC, already have 30 km/h school zones.

There is a growing list of organizations that have expressed their support for this move, including:

- AcTrac (Active Transportation Coalition of Cape Breton County)
- Basinview Drive Community School Travel Planning Committee
- Central Inverness Community Health Board
- Cobequid Community Health Board
- Dartmouth Community Health Board
- Heart and Stroke Foundation of Nova Scotia
- Hike Nova Scotia
- Injury Free Nova Scotia
- LeMarchant-St. Thomas Elementary Home and School Association
- Lunenburg County Community Health Board
- Nova Scotia Bikeways Coalition
- Nova Scotia Chiefs of Police Association
- Recreation Nova Scotia
- Safe Communities HRM
- Safe Kids Canada
- St. Stephen's Elementary School Travel Planning Committee
- Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities

Active & Safe Routes to School works to help more children and youth walk or cycle to school and in their communities. "Speeding is a barrier to this," Barlow explains. "This change would break down that barrier, making it safer for everyone, encouraging more physical activity and fostering less polluting forms of transportation. It's a win-win for everyone."

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A background document is found at <http://tiny.cc/mgcr7>. For more information, contact:

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