

NEWS RELEASE***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

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Bus strike could create student-car conflicts

Halifax – A possible strike of CUPE workers across the province (outside Halifax), including school bus drivers, could mean more students on foot as well as cars arriving at school in the coming weeks. The Ecology Action Centre (EAC) says this could mean a potential increase in conflicts between walking students and cars at schools.

“We’ll definitely see an increase in the number of cars arriving at school during drop off and pick up times and this means trouble,” says Janet Barlow, Coordinator of the Active & Safe Routes to School program at the EAC.

If formerly bussed students live within two or three kilometres from school, walking could be an option. This is an attractive choice for parents who have limited time or who are unable to drive their kids. But for parents whose kids can’t walk to school because it’s too far, many will resort to driving their kids.

“This will create a traffic congestion and safety nightmare. Lots of kids and lots of cars driven by harried parents arriving at school all at the same time is a dangerous combination,” Barlow says. “The walk to school will now become much riskier for many students.”

So what are parents to do if the strike happens?

“We can cut the risk by trying wherever possible to reduce the car traffic arriving at school. We urge parents to consider forming walking school buses (walking groups) or carpooling to ease congestion near schools.”

Active & Safe Routes to School has a Walking School Bus guide available for download at www.saferoutesns.ca. It also offers two safety programs to schools and communities. Making Tracks teaches children and youth walking, cycling, in-line skating and skateboarding safety skills. The Pace Car program helps communities stop speeding on their streets.

Making Tracks and Pace Car are offered with support from the NS Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, the Bicycle Trade Association of Canada, St. FX University and Canada’s home, car and business insurers. Active & Safe Routes to School is coordinated by the EAC in partnership with the NS Department of Health Promotion and Protection as part of the Active Kids Healthy Kids Initiative.

The Ecology Action Centre urges the Province, municipalities and school boards to work together to adopt active transportation policies and plans for schools. This will ensure school walking routes are safe, whether there’s a strike or not. It will also reduce our impact on climate change and increase physical activity for our children and youth.

- 30 -

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