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Executive Board

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Public Hearings Deputation – Bill 57, Schedule 25

INTRODUCTION

Good afternoon Chair and Members of the committee.

My name is John Di Nino and I am the President of ATU Canada proudly representing over 35,000 transportation professionals across Canada including 1,000's of members at properties across Ontario.

In particular, we have members employed by Metrolinx, as well as members at other affected transit properties in Toronto, Hamilton, Mississauga, Brampton, St. Catharines, Brantford, Guelph, Barrie, and Peterborough.

BILL 57

We come before you today as the strong national voice for the Amalgamated Transit Union in Canada on all issues of Canadian interest with significant concerns about this legislation and the encroachment and control being exerted by the government over Metrolinx.

Amendments to the Act serve the purpose of drawing control for the development of transit planning, strategy and control away from a specialized, knowledgeable agency and towards politicians for political interest.

It is our central concern that the government wants this control so that it can privatize public transit in Ontario and seize those portions of existing public transit that it wants – notably the TTC subway system.

MINISTERIAL CONTROL

This Bill first and foremost transforms Metrolinx from an entity charged with responsibility for transit planning to an agency responsible for carrying out the Minister's transit plans.



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Instead of preparing its own Transportation Plan – Metrolinx is now charged with creating a Transportation Plan conforming with the Minister’s Plan.

Once you look deeper into the Bill – it gets worse. Metrolinx Transportation Plan presently HAS to work towards reducing transportation related emissions of smog and greenhouse gasses.

This requirement is eliminated in the Bill.

Why in 2018, as the world heats up, would any government decide to make it easier to pollute?

What do these amendments do?

1. They further reduce accountability and transparency, and further facilitate politically driven privatization projects.
2. These amendments eliminate Mandatory public consultation with the public, municipalities, first nations groups – unions and workers on the creation and amendments of the Transportation Plan.
3. These amendments eliminate public scrutiny of Metrolinx’ investment strategy and make an agency **already** closed off from the public, even more closed off.

To be fair, we have had concerns about Metrolinx for years and amongst our deepest concerns is that Metrolinx has been opaque, unresponsive, and secretive in their dealings and decision making. This culture has made it difficult for our ATU transit professionals and by extension our general public.

In addition, Metrolinx has already had far too great an appetite for expensive and unwieldy privatized projects. These amendments would allow a government to force Metrolinx to impose more privatized public transit on Ontario’s transit riders.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion – this is a Bill that will allow the government to:

- act with less expertise
- act with less consultation
- plan without regard to environmental considerations
- privatize public assets
- chop up existing transit

And the government seeks to accumulate this control without telling Ontarians how they intend to wield it.



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We would ask this committee to give these ill-thought-through amendments close scrutiny.

Subject to any questions, those are our submissions.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

John Di Nino
President
ATU Canada