



July 23, 2010

Wayne Smith  
Acting Chief Statistician of Canada  
Statistics Canada  
170 Tunney's Pasture Driveway  
Ottawa ON K1A 0T6

Dear Mr. Smith:

**Re: 2011 Census and Replacement of Long-Form Questionnaire by Voluntary Survey**

I am writing to you on behalf of the Urban Transportation Council of the Transportation Association of Canada (TAC) to express our serious concerns about the recent decision by the Government of Canada to replace the mandatory long-form census questionnaire with a new and voluntary National Household Survey.

The Transportation Association of Canada is a national association with a mission to promote the provision of safe, secure, efficient, effective and environmentally and financially sustainable transportation services in support of Canada's social and economic goals. TAC's corporate membership of over 550 agencies includes federal, provincial, territorial, regional and municipal government transportation departments, private sector engineering and consulting firms, academic institutions and trade associations. TAC's Urban Transportation Council is comprised of transportation experts from a broad cross section of TAC's membership. Our work focuses on issues, options and methods for planning, developing, managing and financing sustainable transportation systems in Canadian urban areas.

Highly regarded for quality and consistency, Canadian Census data have been invaluable to transportation professionals in conducting analyses and supporting informed decisions to advance Canadian transportation policies, programs and best practices. We are concerned that the expected negative impacts to the reliability, relevance, interpretability and consistency of data collected via the voluntary survey will be significant. The Urban Transportation Council would appreciate receiving information from the Government of Canada, and specifically Statistics Canada, regarding the statistical value of the data that would be collected through a voluntary survey as opposed to the traditional mandatory long form.

We are concerned that the loss of the data collected through the mandatory long form will have an impact on our ability to understand and forecast the activity patterns and transportation needs of Canadians, as well as plan for the delivery of relevant services by all levels of governments, which would be to the detriment of the country's productivity, social and economic well-being. The loss of high-quality data would have negative

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implications for Canadian research and policy development and for the establishment, monitoring and evaluation of transportation related programs.

TAC's members have a long history with the Census, going back to the 1970s. At Statistics Canada's invitation, in the early 1990s TAC coordinated nation-wide input from the transportation user community, which culminated in the addition of the Mode Choice variable to the 1996 Census. More recently, the need to address emerging issues such as sustainable transportation at all levels of government has made the availability of appropriate data essential for cost-effective and timely planning and investment. Over the last three years, TAC has been engaged in discussions with Statistics Canada on the enhancement of the Journey to Work questions in the long-form questionnaire, as part of the 2011 Census content public consultation process. TAC had respectfully recommended that additional information on the mode of transportation, vehicle occupancy and departure time and duration be collected in future Canadian Censuses. Transportation practitioners and policy makers nationally and regionally need these data to track what modes are being used to travel to work as well as the progress being made towards more sustainable transportation behaviour.

If the mandatory long form is not reinstated, we trust that the Journey to Work questions would be included in the proposed new National Household Survey, although we remain concerned about the quality, representativeness, statistical validity and usability of the data collected through a voluntary survey. If there is additional work that needs to be done by TAC to ensure the questions are retained in the National Household Survey, please advise us as soon as possible.

We look forward to your response and remain available for further discussion.

Sincerely,



Claudio Covelli  
Chair, Urban Transportation Council