

MEDIA ADVISORY – PHOTO AND NEWS OPPORTUNITY

TORONTO PARENTS PARADE ON QUEEN'S PARK TO DEMAND "CLEAN AIR FOR LITTLE LUNGS"

Toronto, July 13 – Toronto parents, children, and their supporters will parade on Queen's Park on Monday, July 20, 2009, to **protest Metrolinx's plans to run over 400 diesel-powered trains a day through some of Canada's most densely-populated neighbourhoods**. For the sake of children's health, parents are asking Premier Dalton McGuinty to electrify the proposed Georgetown South Service Expansion (GSSE) and the Union-Pearson Rail Link (UPRL) immediately.

If Metrolinx proceeds with their plans to increase service along the Union Station to Georgetown rail corridor to more than 450 diesel trains a day, thousands of children in West Toronto neighbourhoods would be exposed to high levels of toxic diesel fumes. There are 76 schools and 96 daycare centres within a kilometre of the tracks along this proposed expansion.

Diesel fumes produce a chemical soup of toxic air contaminants that have been implicated in a host of illnesses to which children are especially vulnerable. In a **quote from the recent Board of Health report, Dr. David McKeown, Toronto's Chief Medical Officer of Health** explains: "Numerous recent studies have shown that those who live near busy transportation corridors and hubs... are at significantly greater risk of adverse health impacts than the general population. [These] health impacts include increased prevalence and severity of asthma and other respiratory diseases, diminished lung function, adverse birth outcomes, childhood cancer, and increased mortality."

The **Toronto District School Board, Toronto City Council, and Toronto Board of Health** have all urged Metrolinx to ensure that this rail line expansion is electrified as soon as possible. But despite the harmful health effects of diesel, Metrolinx and the Province still have not committed to using electric trains for expansion of service on this corridor right away.

Parade organizer and Clean Train Coalition member Sophia Wong says, "We want to show Premier Dalton McGuinty that parents of young children are an important voter base, and that we will go to great lengths to protect our children's health."

On July 30, 2009, Metrolinx's environmental assessment goes to the Ontario Minister of the Environment, John Gerretsen, who will have **35 days** to either approve the plan as is or send Metrolinx back to the drawing board. **By the end of September, the decision will have been made, and the course of Toronto's public transit future charted.**

A family-friendly event for people of all ages, the Clean Air For Little Lunds Stroller Parade will include a live music performance by children's entertainers Rob and Soli Joy, including a **new song, "Go Electric," written especially about this issue**. Organizers are aiming to make the parade fun for kids while still sending a strong message to **Premier Dalton McGuinty that electric trains are the only solution to rail expansion in urban areas.**

DATE: Monday, July 20, 2009
TIME: 10-11 a.m.
LOCATION: Queen's Park (front steps of the Ontario Legislature)
WHAT: PHOTO opportunities of parents with strollers, PLUS live music performance by children's entertainers Rob and Soli Joy, including a new song written specifically about this issue.

Media Contact: Carina Cojeen 416-886-2320
Spokesperson: Sophia Wong 416-520-7175
Musical Performer: Rob Joy 416-532-4404, Alistair Ant Productions

- 30 -

Link to song and informational slideshow: <http://www.cleantrain.ca/multimedia.php>