



British Columbia Cycling Coalition

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Honourable Tony Clement
Minister of Industry
C.D. Howe Building
235 Queen Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0H5
Clement.T@parl.gc.ca

Dear Minister Clement,

Re: Canadian 2011 Census Long Form

The British Columbia Cycling Coalition (BCCC) has serious concerns regarding your recent announcement that the 2011 Census long form will be voluntary and not mandatory. Some demographic groups are more likely to complete a voluntary form, while others are less likely, resulting in some groups being overly represented and others under represented or not at all. As statisticians have stated, making the long form voluntary will compromise the integrity of the data.

Of particular concern is the **Commuting Patterns and Places of Work** data. This data is used by municipalities across the country and cycling groups including ourselves and our member organizations who represent thousands of cyclists across British Columbia. This is the only reliable data of this type for many jurisdictions. This data is used to show changes in patterns, helping to determine the allocation of spending and to determine the effect expenditures are having on travel modes. Without this data, it will be difficult and more expensive to determine the levels of growth in cycling and thus quantify the economic, health and other benefits of the investments in cycling infrastructure made by all levels of government. Tens of millions dollars including federal stimulus funding are spent on cycling infrastructure in British Columbia alone. The BCCC is convinced that the mode share for cycling is growing as a result of these investments. Such growth has been demonstrated in the United States through their census statistics. Governments and the cycling community rely on the long form census data to confirm and quantify this growth in Canada.

We were unable to obtain usable commuting data from the 2001 census for Metro Vancouver because the statistic gathering was performed during an extensive transit strike. We were looking forward to the 2011 census to acquire the first useable five year interval data since 1996 but this will not be possible if the long form becomes voluntary. Cycling to work statistics are used internationally for comparing cycling investment and programs, strategies and their effectiveness.

We strongly encourage you to reconsider your decision. If you are unwilling to change this decision, then we recommend that you have Statistics Canada add the questions regarding commuting modes and patterns to the regular census form.

Sincerely,

Jack Becker
President
British Columbia Cycling Coalition

cc: The Right Honourable Stephen Harper Prime Minister of Canada (pm@pm.gc.ca)
Michael Ignatieff, MP Leader of the Opposition (ignatM@parl.gc.ca)
Jack Layton, MP Leader of the NDP (LaytoJ@parl.gc.ca)
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