

Manitoba PC Caucus



NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Lagassé's Rail Safety Awareness Week bill passes second reading

Railway-related accidents can be reduced through greater public education: Lagassé

Bob Lagassé, MLA for Dawson Trail, today saw his private member's bill, the Rail Safety Awareness Week Act, pass in the Legislative Assembly on second reading and proceed to the committee stage. Bill 221 proposes to establish an annual Rail Safety Awareness Week in the second week of September.

"Educating the public is an effective way of reducing railway-related accidents," said Lagassé. "During this Awareness Week, the Manitoba government would encourage citizens, employers and schools to co-operate with rail companies to implement educational programming on railway safety. These programs would focus on spotting and avoiding the dangers associated with rail traffic, especially when it intersects with roads and walkways."

Canada has an annual Rail Safety Week in September, but Bill 221 would go further in making Manitoba the first province to put Rail Safety Awareness Week into law. Though railways fall under federal jurisdiction, Lagassé noted that the province can use educational programs in an effort to reduce injuries and deaths through heightened awareness.

In 2017, there were 222 railway incidents across Canada, including 72 fatalities and 44 serious injuries. In Manitoba alone last year, there were 19 railway incidents resulting in three deaths and five serious injuries.

As Lagassé spoke in the House, Randy Brown, whose 11-year-old daughter Kharma Annette Brown was struck and killed by a train in the Ste. Anne area in September 2017, watched from the public gallery.

"As a father, I am deeply saddened by the tragedy and my heart aches for those who loved her," added Lagassé. "Those of us with the power to act, to improve things, have a responsibility to do so. I have put this bill forward to prevent such accidents from happening in the future."

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