INCOME SECURITY ADVOCACY CENTRE
Centre d'action pour la sécurité du revenu

1500 – 55 University Ave.
Toronto, ON M5J 2H7
Tel: 416-597-5820
Fax: 416-597-5821
Toll-free: 1-866-245-4072
www.incomesecurity.org

Attn: Ministry of the Solicitor General
Strategic Policy Division
25 Grosvenor Street
Toronto, ON M7A 1Y6

October 30, 2026

Re: Submission on potential measures to support public safety and promote economic development by facilitating barrier-free access to key economic and community infrastructure

The Income Security Advocacy Centre (ISAC) is a specialty legal clinic funded by Legal Aid Ontario. ISAC's mandate is to advance the rights and interests of low-income Ontarians with respect to income security and workers' rights. We carry out our mandate through test case litigation, policy advocacy, community organizing, and public education.

Public protest, including temporary disruptions of roadways and public space, is the last available avenue for people without any money to make themselves heard. They cannot hire lobbyists, they cannot purchase tickets to fundraising events, and they do not have advocacy departments to channel their concerns through.

Creating an additional set of rules that will criminalize and/or create financial barriers for people who are exercising their *Charter* rights is unwise and misguided.

Our colleagues at the Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA) stated opposition to the proposed measures clearly in the introduction to their submission for this consultation:

> While the Province indicated that its proposal would "support public safety and promote economic development," it did not demonstrate – or even attempt to demonstrate – that existing laws and police powers are inadequate to address any specific, documented, and legitimate public issue.
>
> The impact of this flawed approach is two-fold. First, many elements of the Government's proposal – for example prohibiting people from physically obstructing access to property – are duplicative of existing legislation and police powers. As a result, if enacted, these provisions would not increase public safety but would instead be redundant.
>
> Second, proposed elements exceeding existing frameworks are described in a way that is so vague and broad that they risk unjustifiably infringing on some of the

fundamental freedoms protected under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. For example, prohibiting unauthorized roadway obstruction in the context of protests despite the absence of safety concerns would severely limit and chill constitutionally protected demonstrations.

Respecting the right to protest means recognizing that peaceful assembly need not be quiet and convenient in order to be constitutionally protected: a protest can be disruptive, interrupt the ordinary flow of daily life, and be offensive to some without ceasing to be peaceful and non-violent. Canadian streets and sidewalks have long served as vital spaces for the exercise of democratic rights, providing a public forum where people can come together, make their voices heard, speak truth to power, and demand social and political change. From labour movements and civil rights demonstrations to contemporary protests, access to these shared civic spaces has been integral to the development of our democracy.

We endorse the CCLA's submission and rationale, emphasizing the following main points:

- Existing legislation and police powers adequately protects public safety
- Restricting unauthorized and intentional obstruction of a roadway in the context of a peaceful protest is constitutionally suspicious
- New arrest powers, especially outside of existing provincial statutory schemes, should not be considered in order to avoid arbitrary and potentially discriminatory application

We urge you to move away from any proposal further criminalizing dissent and welcome the opportunity for further consultation.

Claudia Calabro
Community Organizer, Income Security Advocacy Centre
claudia.calabro@isac.clcj.ca