



RESPONSE TO PETITION

Prepare in English and French marking 'Original Text' or 'Translation'

PETITION No.: **421-03207**

BY: **MR. BRATINA (HAMILTON EAST-STONEY CREEK)**

DATE: **FEBRUARY 7, 2019**

PRINT NAME OF SIGNATORY: **THE HONOURABLE RALPH GOODALE, P.C., M.P.**

Response by the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness

SIGNATURE

Minister or Parliamentary Secretary

SUBJECT

Elderly

ORIGINAL TEXT

REPLY

The Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness (PS) acknowledges the call made by a significant number of concerned citizens upon the Government of Canada to develop a National Silver Alert Strategy for all Canadian provinces and territories.

Seniors are the fastest-growing population group in Canada and the Government of Canada is committed to helping them live healthy, active and independent lives.

The Government of Canada recognizes that seniors' health should not be considered only in the context of health care services, as the majority of seniors live and thrive in their communities. Healthy aging initiatives can prevent illness and injury, reduce the impact of existing health conditions, help people recover from ill health and frailty and increase independence and improve quality of life.

The Government of Canada is committed to improving the lives of Canadians living with dementia, as well as their families and caregivers.

To this end, the Government of Canada is developing a national dementia strategy and, in 2018, launched the Dementia Community Investment, which will provide \$20 million over five years, and \$4 million per year ongoing, to support community-based projects that enhance the well-being of people with dementia and those who care for them.

Canadian seniors make a vital contribution to our society and the Government of Canada is committed to ensuring that policies, programs and services meet their evolving needs. Through planning and foresight, the Government of Canada has made substantial inroads in preparing for an aging population and is committed to continuing to help seniors so that they enjoy the best possible health and quality of life.

With Canada's rapidly aging population, it is anticipated that there will be a significant increase in the number of searches relating to missing persons living with dementia and/or Alzheimer's disease. Recognizing this, in 2018, officials from PS met with the Alzheimer's Society of Canada to begin a dialogue to better understand this complex issue and initiate work, from a public safety and emergency management prevention perspective, to help address the concern raised.

Canada's National Public Alerting System (NPAS), known as "Alert Ready", is a multi-channel Federal-Provincial-Territorial (FPT) all-hazards initiative that provides emergency management organizations throughout Canada with a standard alerting capability to rapidly warn the public of imminent or unfolding hazards to life (e.g. tornados, tsunamis, chemical spills) through radio, cable television, satellite television, e-mail, text services and compatible wireless devices (e.g. smartphones). Further information can be found at: <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/mrgnc-mngmnt/mrgnc-prprdnss/ntnl-pblc-lrtng-sstm-en.aspx> and <https://www.alertready.ca/>.

Emergency management is a responsibility shared by federal, provincial and territorial governments. As such, each jurisdiction is responsible for issuing alerts through the NPAS. PS is not an alert issuer. Federal emergency alerts are only issued by Environment and Climate Change Canada. Provinces and territories, through their emergency management organizations or delegates (e.g., municipalities, local authorities), determine if and when the public needs to be warned of an imminent threat-to-life, and send these critical warnings to the public in the affected geographic regions.

It is our understanding that Alberta and Manitoba are amending their legislation to allow for the establishment of Silver Alert systems. However, FPT Senior Officials Responsible for Emergency Management (SOREM), who oversee the NPAS policy which details the types of emergency alerts that can be sent through the system and immediately broadcast to the public, have not been approached by any province or territory to amend this policy and utilize this system for Silver Alerts.

The Government continues to work closely with provinces and territories on the NPAS emergency alerting initiative with a particular emphasis on communications planning, public awareness and education, and remains committed to ensuring that all Canadians have the information they need to stay safe.