

David Olive  
Toronto Star  
1 Yonge Street  
Toronto, ON  
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May 29, 2015

Dear Mr. Olive,

I am writing with regard to your article in the May 23, 2015, edition of the *Toronto Star* regarding the Takata airbag recall which included a random quip at the end regarding the Toronto Port Authority.

In the article you made reference to “tradition-bound arrogance and lack of transparency” and claimed that the Port of Toronto is “one of the least active on earth.” I’d like to address each of these comments in the spirit of building awareness about our business practices and operations as I suspect you are subscribing to a somewhat misinformed view of the Toronto Port Authority which, for reference, was renamed PortsToronto in January of this year.

Specific to your comment relating to “tradition-bound arrogance,” I could point to the collaborative work we are undertaking at present with the City of Toronto on various files, or the millions we have spent on the development of municipal transportation infrastructure, or the community investment and engagement program we have developed, but ultimately your perception of arrogance is your opinion and you are of course entitled to it. It’s unfortunate that you hold this opinion of our organization and I would welcome the opportunity to have you visit our offices to discuss further.

However, the claim that we “lack transparency” is not an opinion, it is simply inaccurate. PortsToronto is a government business enterprise and holds itself to an industry-leading standard of transparency. Expense reports from our Board and CEO are published quarterly on our website as are executive correspondence, news releases, community meeting minutes, financial statements, reports, audits and presentations. Our status as a government business enterprise requires that our organization adhere to the Access to Information Act, but we also do our best to proactively publish as many letters, reports and documents as possible so as to conduct our business with absolute transparency.

As for the comment that the Port of Toronto is “one of the least active on earth,” I would call your attention to a media release dated March 25, 2015, which confirms that the Port of Toronto experienced an eight-year high in 2014 with more than two million tonnes of cargo arriving on 160 ships, resulting in the highest level of imports since 2007 and representing a 30 per cent increase over 2013. The cargos carried into the Port last year included stone and aggregate imports which increased by 50 per cent, and salt imports which increased nearly 150 per cent, over the year prior.

In addition to the increase in cargo delivered through the Port, six cruise ships carrying a total of more than 2,900 passengers visited PortsToronto’s Cruise Ship Terminal in 2014, nearly five times the number of passengers who visited Toronto via the Port the year prior. The 2015 cruise season is expected to be one of the Port’s busiest to date, with 15 ships bringing more than 3,500 visitors to Toronto from May through to October.

We may not be able to claim that we are the “perch-fishing capital” but we are quite proud of the Port of Toronto and the role it plays in the national transportation chain and its contribution to the economy of Toronto. The Port of Toronto is certainly not the largest in Canada – not surprising given its geographic location and import-focused operations – but it is in the middle of the pack ahead of such coastal ports as Sydney, Nova Scotia, and Nanaimo, British Columbia. The Port of Toronto is an important economic engine to the city as validated by the fact that the City of Toronto included the port in the 2013 revision of its strategic long-term Official Plan.

I trust you receive this information in the spirit in which is intended, and that is education. As an organization, PortsToronto is working towards developing a better public understanding of our business and how we operate. There is still work to be done and with fair and accurate reporting I am confident that improved understanding and awareness will be achieved.

Sincerely,



Geoffrey A. Wilson  
Chief Executive Officer

cc: Doug Cudmore, Business Editor, Toronto Star