

Minister of Transport  
and Leader of the Government  
in the House of Commons



Ministre des Transports  
et leader du gouvernement  
à la Chambre des communes

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0N5

January 26, 2026

Dr. Laura Housden  
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Good day:

Thank you for your correspondence of December 4, 2025, regarding the recognition of nurse practitioners under the medical examination framework established pursuant to the *Railway Safety Act* and the Railway Medical Rules for Positions Critical to Safe Railway Operations (the Rules). I appreciate the time you have taken to outline your concerns and to provide context on the evolving role of nurse practitioners within Canada's healthcare system.

Transport Canada takes the safety of the Canadian rail system seriously and is committed to promoting, monitoring, and enforcing compliance with existing rules and regulations, including medical fitness for duty requirements for safety-critical positions.

As you noted, the current Rules explicitly reference physicians and optometrists with respect to medical examinations and certification of fitness for duty. These provisions were developed to support a consistent, nationally applicable medical oversight framework.

The government recognizes that Canada's healthcare workforce has evolved significantly. We also acknowledge that nurse practitioners are regulated health professionals with advanced education, training, and competencies authorized by provincial and territorial regulatory bodies to perform many functions relevant to the assessment and management of medical fitness for work.

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Your letter highlights the importance of ensuring that regulatory frameworks remain effective, aligned, and responsive to changing circumstances, while continuing to uphold the highest standards of safety.

Transport Canada will take your suggestions into consideration as part of its ongoing review of railway safety-related legislative and regulatory frameworks. This includes examining whether opportunities exist, within current legislative and regulatory authorities, to improve clarity or flexibility while maintaining safety outcomes. Such work is complex and requires extensive consultation and collaboration.

We appreciate your offer to engage further and to support a technical review of the necessary legislative or regulatory amendments. Transport Canada officials may follow up should additional information be required to inform this work.

Thank you again for bringing this matter to our attention and for your continued interest in strengthening railway safety while improving access and efficiency.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Steve MacKinnon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Steve" and the last name "MacKinnon" clearly distinguishable.

The Honourable Steven MacKinnon, P.C., M.P.  
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