

**From:** Simon Langer  
**To:** General Government and Licensing  
**Cc:** Councillor Ainslie  
**Subject:** Attention: General Government and Licensing Committee  
**Date:** January 11, 2019 3:25:11 PM

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**January 11, 2019**

Dear respected members of the General Government and Licensing Committee,

Diabetes Canada is very saddened to learn of the recent deaths of two individuals in clothing donation bins belonging to other charitable organizations located in West Vancouver, BC and in Toronto, ON. These two recent deaths have, understandably, raised concerns over the safety of clothing donation boxes.

As you review municipal licensing and safety standards of clothing donation drop boxes and bins, I am writing to you to ask that you please consider hearing directly from Diabetes Canada about the recent action taken by our charitable organization to reduce the risks associated with people misusing or trying to enter our bins.

I would also like to share information about how our clothing donation bins are an essential component of our community donor engagement function and advise of the positive impact it makes in our support of 11 million Canadians with diabetes or prediabetes including those living in the city of Toronto. Until such time as we are able to meet, I have outlined our actions and the impact that the generosity of Torontonians is making through their textile diversion and clothing bin donations through Diabetes Canada.

Diabetes Canada has operated charitable clothing donation boxes, in good standing, in the City of Toronto and across Canada for more than two decades.

Although accidents or deaths related to clothing donation bins are rare, we feel that we must act to help prevent further tragedies and are doing so. Diabetes Canada announced its intention to modify its clothing donation bins on January 4, 2019. Working with our Canadian-based clothing donation bin manufacturer using their technical guidance and/or parts, approximately 4,000 Diabetes Canada clothing donation bins across Canada, including those in the City of Toronto, have already been or are in the process of being retrofitted or modified in an effort to prevent injury or death to those misusing or trying to gain entry to our clothing donation bins.

The most effective way for Diabetes Canada to modify these bins is to do it at each donation bin location; all modifications are expected to be completed by January 18, 2019. We expect the changes to our clothing donation bins located in the City of Toronto to be complete by January 15, 2019.

Funds raised through our textile diversion operations have played a key role in supporting Diabetes Canada activities for more than 20 years. The organization relies on the generosity of Canadians who donate clothing and small household donations through these bins and via home pick-up service. These donations represent nearly 25 per cent of Diabetes Canada's total revenues (2017), providing essential funding for our research and advocacy activities, our diabetes camps for children with type 1 diabetes and to develop the resources we provide to health-care professionals.

From an environmental perspective, the program diverts more than 100 million pounds of clothing and household items from landfill sites across Canada. This translates into savings of 1 billion kWh of energy - equivalent to removing 212,087 cars from roads; saves 7,257 mature trees; conserves 167,828 litres of water; and reduces our carbon footprint by 280 million pounds of CO2.

While we understand the concerns raised about the safety of clothing donation boxes, Diabetes Canada is committed to trying as best we can to reduce harm and prevent risks of injury or worse through our donation bin operations and feel we have acted immediately to address these concerns.

If possible, I would like to meet with members of Toronto City Council, the General Government and Licensing Committee and executives and staff members of the City of Toronto Municipal Licensing and Standards to further expand on how we can work together and with other charitable organizations which operate clothing donation bins to address any questions around the operation and safety standards of clothing donation bins. We are also interested in doing a deputation to the General Government and Licensing Committee on Monday morning (January 14th) should the opportunity present itself.

In the meantime, please take into consideration our action to modify our bins in an effort to prevent injury or death to those entering our bins as you review municipal licensing and safety standards of clothing donation drop boxes.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Warm regards,

**Simon Langer**

National Manager, Government and Strategic Partnerships

National Diabetes Trust

**Cc: Councillor Paul Ainslie, Chair, General Government and Licensing Committee**

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