

# Township of Frontenac Islands

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The Honourable Sylvia Jones  
Minister of Health

Dear Minister Jones,

I am writing to you on behalf of the residents of Wolfe Island, a close-knit community that has long faced significant challenges in emergency medical care. We are reaching out with deep concern for the current state of emergency medical services on our island and the urgent need for a sustainable solution.

The catalyst for our community's fight for better medical services dates back to a tragic event on October 27, 1973. Marc McAllister, a young resident, was seriously injured when a tractor flipped over during a hayride. With no ambulance service on the island, Marc's friends and family were forced to load him onto an old barn door and transport him by pickup truck to the nearest hospital. Despite their best efforts, Marc died on the operating table, and his death left the entire community shaken.

In response to this tragedy, Wolfe Island residents, led by Dr. George Merry, established a volunteer ambulance service in 1974. This service operated for over 40 years, saving countless lives. For example, in 1994, when a local farmer was mauled by a bull and sustained crush injuries similar to Marc's, the Volunteer Ambulance service arrived within minutes, stabilized the patient, and safely transported him to the hospital, where he survived.

However, starting in 2015, government requirements for paramedic training made it increasingly difficult to recruit volunteers, leading to the transfer of the service to Frontenac County. Unfortunately, the promises made to the island residents about maintaining the service using unionized paramedics have not been fulfilled. Today, our community is back in the same desperate situation we faced 50 years ago, where first responders are forced to wait for a ferry to transport an ambulance from Kingston. This waiting time puts lives at risk and raises the very real possibility of further tragedies.

We also have concerns regarding the proposed implementation of the Medical Priority Dispatch System on February 5th. The new prioritization of response times based on injury severity could further delay response times to Wolfe Island residents, exacerbating our already fragile situation.

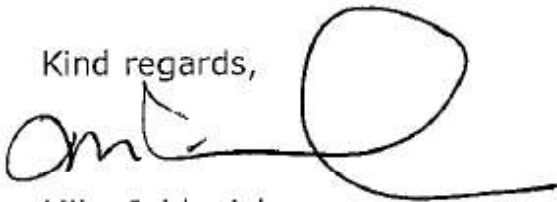
While a fully funded and staffed ambulance dedicated to Wolfe Island would be the ideal solution, we understand that financial constraints may make this infeasible. We propose an alternative: a fully funded Patient Transport Vehicle, operated by trained Fire Department personnel, which could be used to stabilize and transport patients to meet the Ambulance. This would help bridge the gap and meet the provincial standards for patient care, especially in cases where the ferry is the only means of transporting an ambulance from Kingston.

Our situation is unique to the province, as we are dependent on a ferry for emergency medical transport. In the event that the ferry is out of service, we rely on the coast guard or air ambulance, but even then, we face the challenge of getting the patient to the pickup point. We must avoid a repeat of the tragic "barn door in the back of a truck" scenario.

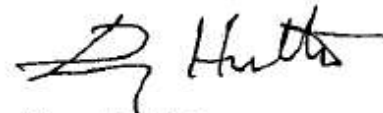
We respectfully request your support in working with us to find a viable, reliable solution to our emergency medical care needs. Wolfe Island residents, like all Ontarians, deserve access to prompt, effective medical treatment when faced with an emergency. We are committed to working collaboratively with your office to prevent further tragedies and ensure the health and safety of our community.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to your response and hope for a positive resolution.

Kind regards,



Mike Jablonicky,  
Councillor  
Township of Frontenac Islands



Dan Hulton  
Councillor  
Township of Frontenac Islands



Vanessa Latimer, AMCT  
CAO/Clerk  
Township of Frontenac Islands



Tim Hawkins  
Wolfe Island Fire Chief  
Township of Frontenac Islands