

**Subject: Agenda Item #6 Jan 17 2005 " Use of English on Commercial Signs"**

**Date:** Sun, 16 Jan 2005 15:34:47 -0800

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Your Worship & Members of Council,

On the "Use of English on Commercial Signs" – Agenda Item #6 of January 17, 2005 I urge council to debate the issue.

I do so because I believe that Council should send a clear message to the community that you support the fundamental right of freedom of expression as stated in section 2b of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Although this right is, according to section 1 of the Charter, "subject only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society" I firmly believe that to force the use of English cannot be so justified.

Most Canadians feel that article 58 of Quebec Charter of the French Language goes too far in doing what this very motion proposes to do. Language should not require "legal protection". Although I believe there is a role to be played by governments in regulating commerce, that role should not trounce on our fundamental rights. The marketplace and our educational system are powerful forces that respond adequately to those who are unwise to not display English on their commercial signs. As well, we should be proud of our diversity, compassion, tolerance, and accommodation to those who are new to our country.

Although a policy of "English on Commercial Signs" may seem perfectly reasonable and appear to many to lack a hidden agenda, to others, and particularly minority groups, they may smack of discrimination. This is not what we as Canadians are about. Council, through proper debate on this issue, should clearly signal this to the community.

Yours truly,

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