



Monday, February 8, 2016

The Honourable Marc Garneau  
Minister of Transport  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON, K1A 0A6

**Re: Request to meet about rail safety**

Dear Minister Garneau,

We wish to congratulate you on your election to the House of Commons, as well as on your appointment to the Cabinet as our Minister of Transport. We would like to meet with you in the near future.

We belong to a large continental network of groups and organizations that advocate for greater transparency and safeguards with respect to the transportation of crude oil and other hazardous materials through rail communities across Canada and the U.S. We are committed to raising awareness at local and national levels, and seek to support those living along rail lines across both our countries.

When Prime Minister Trudeau publicly released his mandate letter to you on November 13, 2015, we were pleased to see a 'review of rail safety regulations' included. We strongly believe that our government should protect us on this matter by setting the standards for rail safety and enforcing them. In the enclosed September 18<sup>th</sup> Liberal Party response to **Safe Rail Communities'** request for clear policy on rail safety, Anna Gainey, Liberal Party President, wrote:

There is no question that it is the government's responsibility to protect the safety of Canadians who travel on the rails, live near railway tracks, and those who operate railways.....

A Liberal government will prioritize Canadians' public safety. We will increase government regulation and enforcement for the transportation of dangerous substances over rail and provide Transport Canada with the necessary funding and resources to hire and train an

adequate number of dangerous goods and rail safety inspectors to ensure proper oversight of the rail industry.

Furthermore, the Liberal party has committed to several clear actions related to rail safety, including:

We also believe that the general public and organizations like **Safe Rail Communities** must be meaningfully engaged as partners as we strive to protect their safety and deliver the government Canadians deserve.

We enthusiastically accept the invitation to engage with the Government of Canada on this urgent transportation issue as you work to implement Liberal commitments made during the election. We look forward to discussing further what can be done in the short-term to protect Canadians while railway regulations are reviewed and revised. For example, as there has been insufficient improvement in the state of the railway tracks on the downward slope travelling towards the downtown of Lac-Mégantic, we ask for an immediate moratorium on dangerous goods moving through this town, whose citizens have paid the ultimate price. The risk of another tragedy in Lac-Mégantic is very real, as you can see in this YouTube video, prepared by Robert Bellefleur. The video clearly illustrates the increased deterioration of the train tracks:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zsQYi3-UQSM>

Canadians in rail communities across this country look to you and our government to act on our behalf, to protect us, our families, and our neighbours. Public safety must come first. Unfortunately, after more than two years since the tragedy of Lac-Mégantic, there remains much to be done to reassure families living, working, and playing within our communities of their safety.

We look forward to hearing from you soon about a possible meeting date.

Sincerely,

Patricia Y. Lai & Helen Vassilakos, Co-founders  
**Safe Rail Communities**

*\*\* Please see attached list of signatories to this letter in support of rail safety in Canada. \*\**

c.c.: Right Hon. Justin Trudeau  
Prime Minister of Canada

Hon. Ralph Goodale  
Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness

Hon. Catherine McKenna  
Minister of Environment and Climate Change

Hon. Jane Philpott  
Minister of Health

Hon. Carolyn Bennett  
Minister of Indigenous and Northern  
Affairs

Hon. Chrystia Freeland  
Minister of International Trade

Hon. Robert D. Nault  
MP, Kenora

Hon. Lisa Raitt  
MP, Milton

Luc Berthold  
MP, Mégantic – L'Érable

Rob Oliphant  
MP, Don Valley West

Julie Dzerowicz  
MP, Davenport

Yasmin Ratansi  
MP, Don Valley East

Wayne Long  
MP, Saint John – Rothesay

Brigitte Sansoucy  
MP, Saint Hyacinthe – Bagot

Arif Virani  
MP, Parkdale-High Park

## Signatories to the Letter to Minister Garneau in Support of Rail Safety in Canada

James Isbister, Chair  
**Bloor West Village Residents Association**

Émile Vigneault  
**Bombe sur Rail**

Gini Dickie & Karen Weisberg  
**Christie/Dupont Safe Rail Community**

Robert Bellefleur & Marilaine Savard  
**Citoyens engagés de Lac-Mégantic**

Nicole Jetté  
**Convoi-citoyen**

Terry West, President  
**Don Mills Residents Association Inc.**

Steven Guilbeault, Directeur Principal  
**Équiterre**

Karen Mahon & Sven Biggs  
**Forest Ethics Advocacy**

Dr. Nancy Grant  
**Rothesay, NB**

Rita Bijons & Paul Mero, Co-chairs  
**Green 13**

Dave Ceno Loyie  
**Keepers of the Athabasca**

Rita Vogel Post, Chairman  
**Milton R.A.I.L. (Residents Affected by Intermodal Lines)**

Stacey Newman  
**Milton Says No**

Chris Lowry, Board Member  
**Moore Park Residents Association**

**Mouvement Tache d'huile**

Lewis Reford, President  
**North Rosedale Residents Association**

**Réseau Vigilance Hydrocarbures Québec**

Larissa Stendie, Climate and Energy Campaigner  
**Sierra Club B.C.**

Amy Lee Chong, Board Member  
**Summerhill Residents Association Inc.**

Andrea Harden  
**The Council of Canadians**

Timothy Naronha, Chairperson  
**The West Bend Community Association**

Teika Newton, Executive Director  
**Transition Initiative Kenora**

Peter Miasek, President  
**Transport Action Ontario**

Sarah Doucette, Councillor  
**Ward 13 Parkdale - High Park, Toronto**

Ana Bailão, Councillor  
**Ward 18 Davenport, Toronto**

Josh Matlow, Councillor  
**Ward 22 St. Paul's, Toronto**

Mary Fragedakis, Councillor  
**Ward 29 Toronto - Danforth**

Phillip Francis, Director  
**Wynford Concorde Group (MSCC 2388)**

Brent Rogers, President & Director  
**Wynford Concorde Group (TSCC 2388)**