



Transport Action Canada
Box 858, Station B
Ottawa, ON
K1P 5P9

July 18, 2018

Honourable Marc Garneau
Minister, Transport Canada
330 Sparks Street
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0N5

BY POST AND EMAIL: Marc.Garneau@parl.gc.ca

Dear Minister Garneau:

RE: Development and Implementation of an Integrated Multi-Modal Transportation Strategy

In the wake of Greyhound's announcement that it plans to abandon all but one of its bus services west of Sudbury, it's time for Canada's elected officials to show the leadership Canadian voters expect, by facilitating the development and implementation of an integrated multi-modal transportation strategy that serves all Canadians.

Canadians only pay taxes because they trust their elected representatives to protect their interests. Most Canadians don't care which level of government has jurisdiction, they just want to know that public goods and services will continue to be available at a reasonable cost. Canada needs to work with industry, the provinces, territories, municipalities and indigenous leadership groups to optimize the transportation network that Canadians need and expect.

Canada is too large and sparsely populated to rely completely on the private sector to provide transportation services on a purely commercial basis. If Canada is to remain a federation, our elected leaders must see to it that legislation, regulations, policies and procedures are in place (and enforced—see Churchill) to ensure the continued provision of transportation services that meet the needs of all Canadians.

Greyhound's decision to abandon much of the Canadian market has spurred a few competitors to publicly consider picking up the slack on some of the more attractive routes, but passengers from smaller and more remote communities are unlikely to retain bus service at all. Affordability is irrelevant when there are no options.

.../2

Canadians who rely on passenger services in remote and rural communities will find it nearly impossible to attend medical appointments or court appearances, to access most government services, to visit family and friends in need, or even to get to work. Having to resort to hitchhiking has already been shown to lead to tragic outcomes for missing and murdered indigenous women and girls.

Canada relies on the mobility of labour to help address labour market imbalances between its regions. If labour doesn't have access to convenient and affordable transportation, unemployment rises, businesses can't meet targets, and Canada suffers.

An integrated multi-modal transportation strategy needs to address the varied needs of many Canadians: those in remote and rural communities; urban commuters; and workers and tourists traveling between towns and cities.

Progress has already been made in some areas. Recent investments in mass transit projects are expected to accommodate the continued growth of Canada's most populated urban regions. VIA Rail's High Frequency Rail initiative promises to shift more people from cars into trains along their highest-density routes. Air carriers continue to operate competitively in a protected sector.

But the very real impacts of Greyhound's announced abandonment aren't addressed by any of these developments. They will be felt immediately by average Canadian voters with pressing everyday needs.

Short-term solutions must be identified and implemented in the context of the prioritized development of larger national and regional long-term strategies. One realistic example could be the reintroduction of more frequent passenger trains where VIA Rail already operates in Western Canada. Another could involve the provision of fuel tax rebates to service providers on low-volume routes. Consultations with industry will yield other viable and immediate workarounds.

Other creative solutions have already been successfully tested in Canada and elsewhere, and should be evaluated for implementation. For example: leveraging postal delivery services, school buses, medical transportation taxi services; collaborating with new providers like Uber and Lyft to explore possible opportunities; facilitating ride-sharing services.

A new Canadian integrated multi-modal transportation strategy should of course recognize and work towards our international commitments to meeting emission reduction targets. But we need to look beyond the short-term cost-benefit analyses that drive most decisions, and instead try to plan for the needs of our grandchildren's grandchildren.

Canada has already shown that it is fully committed to facilitating the transportation of our natural resources. Surely its citizens are no less important a natural resource to our economy.

Transport Action Canada (<http://transportaction.ca>) is Canada's largest non-government organization focussing on sustainable public transportation, particularly passenger rail and bus. We have over 40 years' experience in advocating for improvements in these modes. We stand ready to provide professional and considered advice in our advocacy of passenger rights, now and into the future.

Yours sincerely,



Steffen Knippel
Transport Action Canada
Vice-President, Prairie

cc: Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister (justin.trudeau@parl.gc.ca)
Honourable Claire Trevena, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, British Columbia (Minister.Transportation@gov.bc.ca)
Honourable Richard Mostyn, Minister of Highways and Public Works, Yukon Territory (Richard.Mostyn@gov.yk.ca)
Honourable Brian Mason, Minister of Transportation, Alberta (transportation.minister@gov.ab.ca)
Honourable Wally Schumann, Minister of Infrastructure, Northwest Territories (wally_schumann@gov.nt.ca)
Honourable Ron R. Schuler, Minister of Infrastructure, Manitoba (minmi@leg.gov.mb.ca)
Honourable David Akeeagok, Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Nunavut (dakeeagok@gov.nu.ca)
Honourable John Yakabuski, Minister of Transportation, Ontario (minister.mto@ontario.ca)
Honourable André Fortin, Minister of Transport, Sustainable Mobility and Transport Electrification, Québec (Andre.Fortin.PONT@assnat.qc.ca)
Honourable Bill Fraser, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, New Brunswick (bill.fraser@gnb.ca)
Honourable Paula J. Biggar, Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy (pjbiggar@gov.pe.ca)
Honourable Lloyd Hines, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, Nova Scotia (TIRMIN@novascotia.ca)
Honourable Steve Crocker, Minister of Transportation and Works, Newfoundland and Labrador (twminister@gov.nl.ca)