



# TRANSPORT ACTION ONTARIO

(formerly Transport 2000 Ontario)

*Advocating for Sustainable Public and Freight Transportation*

Box 6418, Station "A" Toronto, ON M5W 1X3

[www.transport-action-ontario.com](http://www.transport-action-ontario.com)

Mr. Bill Walker, MPP Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound  
Room 410, Queen's Park Main Legislative Building  
Toronto, ON M7A 1A8

Via email: [bill.walker@pc.ola.org](mailto:bill.walker@pc.ola.org)

January 31, 2014

Dear Mr. Walker:

## **All-party Rural and Northern Ontario Transportation Committee**

Please accept the congratulations of Transport Action Ontario for your successful resolution to immediately strike this committee at Queen's Park. It is always encouraging seeing the issue of personal mobility on the provincial agenda, as it is of importance to all Ontarians.

Transport Action Ontario is a not-for-profit organization advocating for sustainable public and freight transportation. We research these issues and engage in discussion with government at all levels and the general public in pursuit of fair and optimised solutions. Our group includes transportation specialists and advisors who contribute technical, commercial and community input. We are multi-modal in our approach and work towards forward-thinking solutions that meet the needs of the broader public while being affordable and cost-effective.

One of our priority areas is improving intercity rail and bus service in Ontario. We have numerous projects underway in southwest, northern and eastern Ontario, as summarized on our website.

For example, one important project is restoring and improving VIA Rail passenger train service along the North Main Line (NML) through Kitchener, Stratford, London and Sarnia. Communities and businesses along this route are very aware of the negative effects of the potential loss of rail services and are taking action both at the federal and provincial level. While this is to the south of your own constituency, you will agree that it has very negative implications for the prosperity and liveability of a substantial area of rural Ontario.

For this project, our thinking is that a customer-centric rail service along the NML should be a spine offering travellers access by rural bus from other communities where rail services are not economically justified. They would then have the option of car-free access to cities served by rail such as London and Toronto, with onward travel connections. It would be of particular appeal to students, those are unable or choose not to drive and others with mobility impairment. It fits with a growing public

consensus that we cannot prosper with a grossly out-of-balance public transportation system. We believe this to be clearly within the mandate of your All-Party Committee.

There are many other citizen and business organizations in Ontario also advocating for improved passenger rail service, including: Rail Action in Lambton, Save Via, Southwest Economic Alliance, Getting there: CFUW Stratford, Shining Waters Railway, and Northern and Eastern Ontario Rail Network. I have copied these organizations on this letter. I know this letter is consistent with their goals also.

Transport Action Ontario has two asks:

1. Information about the Committee – members, meeting dates, mandate etc.
2. An opportunity to address the Committee, as we can offer valuable perspectives on some of the more fundamental mobility issues facing rural and northern Ontarians. Our input would complement the Committee's own knowledge base and potentially be the basis of a good, working partnership.

We look forward to hearing from you on this critical initiative.

Yours truly,

*Peter Miasek*

Peter Miasek  
President, Transport Action Ontario

Cc:

RAIL – Mabel Higgins, Jim Houston

Save VIA – Chris West

SWEA – Serge Lavoie

Getting There: CFUW Stratford – Sheila Clarke

Shining Waters – Tony Smith

NEORN – Linda Savory-Gordon, Phil Konig, Marie Price