



Advocating for Sustainable Public and Freight Transportation
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Honorable Philippe Couillard (French version)
Premier ministre
Ministère du Conseil exécutif
875, Grande Allée Est
Québec (Québec) G1R 4Y8

Honourable Kathleen Wynne, Premier
Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1A1

RE: Improving Rail Mobility and Transportation between Ontario and Québec

Dear Premier Couillard and Premier Wynne:

Congratulations to both of you on your election victories earlier this year. We are encouraged to observe a new spirit of economic cooperation between our two provinces. We wish to inform you of one such opportunity offering great potential – improved inter-city and inter-provincial passenger and freight rail within the Windsor-Quebec City corridor. As you know, rail offers many benefits such as congestion reduction on highways, mobility choices for people and environmental benefits, including climate change reduction. However, to truly reach its potential, this industry will require more attention and more legislative and financial support from government.

Our two groups are long-standing non-government organizations (NGO's) advocating for sustainable transportation, including urban transit and inter-city rail and bus. We were both founded over 30 years ago, and are the largest NGOs oriented to transportation in our respective provinces.

We note that many expert organizations have confirmed the benefits of High Speed Passenger Rail (HSR). For example, the University of Toronto Rotman School of Management, in their 2009 report "*Capitalizing on the Opportunity for Greater Economic Cooperation between Ontario and Quebec*" listed

numerous attributes of the Montreal – Toronto mega region supporting HSR, such as high population, education and knowledge creation, training, corporate headquarters and industry clusters. The study concluded that HSR would greatly benefit this mega region.

The most recent Federal – Provincial technical study of HSR was released in 2011 by Ecotrain, a group of consulting firms. The study evaluated two options, each involving a new corridor adjacent or apart from the current passenger rail corridors. However, other options also exist. There has been some limited progress on this issue. In 2007 and 2009, the federal government committed over \$900M to VIA Rail Canada to incrementally improve fixed infrastructure and rolling stock, largely in the Toronto-Ottawa-Montreal corridor. However, for a variety of reasons, this work is over budget, behind schedule and likely will not be completed. And, recently, the Ontario government has initiated studies on a HSR link between Toronto and London/Windsor.

It is no secret that our expressways are clogged with transport trucks, adding to congestion costs for business and individuals. Investment in the rail network, such as additional rail-rail and road-rail grade separations, additional track, exclusive freight corridors and new intermodal facilities is likely more cost-effective than expanding the highways. In the USA, the investment model is public-private-partnerships involving the federal and state governments and the affected freight railways. A similar model should be explored in Canada.

In conclusion, we believe that Ontario and Quebec should initiate cooperative work on improving intercity railways in the Windsor – Quebec City corridor, in conjunction with the federal government. As a first step, following a commitment from the two Premiers, a meeting of key stakeholders, including federal and provincial officials, the railways and NGO's such as ours, should be convened. We look forward to your response on this promising idea.

Yours truly,

Peter Miasek

Peter Miasek
President, Transport Action Ontario

Francois Pepin

Francois Pepin
President, Transport 2000 Quebec

cc. Hon. Minister Steven Del Duca, Minister of Transportation (Ontario)
Hon. Minister Robert Poeti, Ministre des Transports du Quebec