



February 18, 2016

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Re: The Importance of Canada's VIA Rail Passenger Service

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada
The Honourable Kathleen Wynne, Premier of Ontario

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau and Premier Wynne:

Coupled with the South West Ontario Transportation Association (SWOTA) work "[Network Southwest Plan](#)" and "[Modernizing Intercity Bus Services \(EBR 012-4351\)](#)", Transport Action Canada's "[The VIA 1-4-10 Plan](#)" creates the potential to transform mass transportation services in Southwestern Ontario and similarly on a national scale. The Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus Inc. (the WOWC) is a not-for-profit organization representing 14 counties and Chatham-Kent serving a population and employment base of 2,454,379 and 1,180,010 respectively in western Ontario. The purpose of WOWC is to enhance the prosperity and overall wellbeing of rural and small urban communities across the region.

At its meeting on February 12, 2016, the Western Ontario Wardens Caucus (WOWC), through resolution, recognized the importance of VIA Rail to the national, provincial and regional economy and the vital role it can play in the reduction of greenhouse gases from transportation in a Canada-Ontario Climate Change Strategy. To this end, the WOWC encourages a strategic partnership between the Federal Government, the Provincial Government, VIA Rail, and Metrolinx to advance a coordinated and enhanced Quebec-Windsor Passenger Rail Corridor.

WOWC fully supports an integrated mass transportation model that will maximize the inter-municipal mass transportation value of the VIA Rail corridor. We believe this can be achieved while optimizing and complementing coordination with GO Transit services, municipal transit systems, and foster small urban and rural community connections in Southwestern Ontario through use of a modernized motor coach industry based VIA corridor feeder system and, in areas currently serviced, fully integrated GO Transit services.

We would appreciate the opportunity to discuss with key members the Government of Canada, the Government of Ontario, VIA Rail and Metrolinx the important High Performance Rail (HPR) advantages (cost, performance and implementation time) to Ontario's High Speed Rail (HSR) and or VIA's High Frequency Rail (HFR) proposals.

Yours truly,

Randy Hope
Chair Western Ontario Wardens Caucus
Mayor of Chatham-Kent

Attachment

Copy to:
The Honourable Catherine McKenna, Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, Canada
The Honourable Glen Murray, Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, Ontario
The Honourable Marc Garneau, Minister of Transport, Canada
The Honourable Steven Del Duca, Minister of Transportation, Ontario
Mr. Yves Desjardins-Siciliano, President and CEO, VIA Rail
Mr. Bruce McCuaig, President & CEO, Metrolinx