



TRANSPORT ACTION ONTARIO

Advocating for Rail-Based Public Transportation
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Transport Action Ontario rejects high-speed political vanity project, calls for high-performance rail plan

TORONTO – In a hard-hitting policy statement, the transportation advocacy group, Transport Action Ontario (TAO), calls for the rejection of the provincial government’s high-speed rail (HSR) proposal and its replacement with a more practical, high-performance rail (HPR) alternative.

“Will the Government of Ontario’s rosy predictions about the benefits of HSR actually materialize?” asks TAO president Robert Wightman. “The odds are they will not. Even in countries where HSR is deemed to be a success, there are problems.”

The HSR proposal endorsed by the current Government of Ontario is estimated to cost as much as \$30 billion and can’t be fully built to Windsor until at least 2031. Among the points TAO finds deadly to the Ontario HSR scheme are:

- 1 An inability to operate at true high speed between Toronto and Kitchener, where the trains must share GO’s lower-speed tracks;
- 2 The need for high station platforms, which will boost construction costs by requiring both high- and low-level platforms for HSR and GO trains;
- 3 The lack of a well-developed network of rail, bus and transit services to feed passengers to the HSR trains and make truly car-free travel possible; and
- 4 The bypassing of major centres on the two existing Toronto-London passenger lines, including Brampton, Stratford, St. Marys, Oakville, Burlington, Brantford, Woodstock and Ingersoll.

TAO describes the government’s Toronto-London-Windsor HSR proposal as “a vanity project on which politicians fixate, similar to other politically-motivated mega-projects, such as Toronto’s controversial Union Pearson Express.”

The public advocacy group recommends its replacement with a better and more affordable high-

performance rail (HPR), which has been proven on many comparable rail corridors around the world, including the U.S.

HPR includes major improvements to the existing infrastructure to boost speed and frequency, new trains and revisions to the fare structure to provide a fast, frequent and affordable service that can be running in less than half the time of HSR at a much lower cost. Because HPR is implemented incrementally, it provides improvements the public can use every step of the way.

HPR's multiple benefits are outlined in the TAO booklet, [*This is High-Performance Rail*](#)

Says Wightman, "This is the course of urgent action TAO is advocating. Pursuing HSR after so many failed attempts over nearly 40 years will only lead to further deterioration of our public transportation system, the competitiveness of our economy and our quality of life. We cannot afford to waste years on another gee-whiz scheme that is, at best, a pre-election vote chaser."

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