

TRANSPORT ACTION NEWSLETTER

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Passenger flight experience TOWARDS AN AIR TRAVEL CODE

At the present time, there is a good deal of media coverage of surcharges by airlines at a time when seat size and spacing between seats have been shrinking. At the same time, there continue to be complaints about issues such as overbooking, weather-related delays and other consumer issues.

The Public Interest Advocacy Centre (PIAC) in Ottawa was asked in December 2014 to conduct a research study on current consumer protections and options for recourse, for presentation to the

Canada Transportation Act Review. PIAC was also asked to conduct a comparative analysis of air passenger complaint resolution in other jurisdictions. PIAC was to propose new models of complaint resolution to improve consumer protection. Its final report was delivered on April 1st, 2015.

The report recommends that policymakers study the complaint resolution model employed by the Canadian telecommunications complaints commissioner. PIAC also recommended two measures to address the issues consumers experience with the current (weak) complaints régime:

a document to champion the rights of Canadian air passengers (as in the USA) and

a body dedicated to resolve air passenger complaints about any airline operating in Canada.

The document would be a binding statement of rules for air travel in Canada and the recreation of an Air Passenger Complaints Commissioner, guided by a binding "Air Travel Code". The new system would be inspired by the ombudsman and rules now existing for telecommunications.

Transport Canada had appointed a former hockey referee as Airline Complaints Commissioner in an era when mergers of airlines and churn in the air transport industry created fears of a monopoly situation developing. This Commissioner lasted but two years, and despite (or was it because of?) the official's effective work, the Government closed down his position. Now we have come full circle with a public body getting a report that confirms the need for a clear channel for complaints and an official empowered to resolve them.

Despite the delayed arrival, air passengers will be pleased with this new "aircraft" if it is allowed to land.— *Harry Gow*



Railroad shortline in Saskatchewan

Fresh air for infrastructure

SASKATOON, Saskatchewan — Thirteen Saskatchewan shortline railroads are sharing a total of \$900,000 in grants to improve rail infrastructure in the province, part of the Shortline Railway Sustainability Program. The grants are matched by each shortline, meaning at least \$1.8 million will be invested in shortline trackage this year.

The railroads include Big Sky Rail, Carlton Trail Railway, Fife Lake Railway, Great Sandhills Railway, Great Western Railway, Last Mountain Railway, Long Creek Railroad, Red Coat Road & Rail, Southern Rails, Stewart Southern Railway, Thunder Rail, Torch River Rail, and Wheatland Railway.

“Shortlines provide an efficient connection to mainline rail which benefits the rural economy,” says Nancy Heppner, minister responsible for the Saskatchewan Grain Car Corp. “This grant improves service to our export-based economy and removes trucks from our highway system.”

The program provides grants for projects like upgrading track, stabilizing roadbed, and repairing bridges. The grants are funded by the Saskatchewan Grain Car Corp.

Including 2015, the program has provided \$5.6 million in grants since 2008, leveraging a total investment of more than \$11 million in Saskatchewan’s short lines. —*trn.trains.com* /



GREAT WESTERN RAILRAY NEAR VERWOOD, SK (picture by John Leopard)

New suburban-to-suburban light rail

Hurontario line is on his way



HURONTARIO LINE WIL LINK BRAMPTON AND PORT CREDIT (picture from urbantoront.ca)

Canada’s Ontario Province will be covering the entire cost of a 14.2-mile, \$1.6 billion light rail line connecting the Port Credit (Mississauga) and Brampton GO Transit regional/commuter rail stations, Transportation Minister Steven Del Duca confirmed on April 21, 2015.

According to a report in Toronto’s *Globe & Mail*, construction is slated to start in 2018 for a planned 2022 service start-up of the “Hurontario” LRT. Though funding is now in place, “hurdles re-

main—the route through downtown Brampton remains contentious and will require [city] council approval,” the paper reported.

The mayors of Mississauga and Brampton joined Del Duca in announcing the provincial government’s plan to foot the entire bill. The new LRT system “will become that north-south spine of a regionally integrated transit system,” said Mississauga Mayor Bonnie Crombie. “Today’s announcement is a real game-changer for the city of Mississauga’s promising future.”

When added to a \$13.5 billion GO Transit expansion plan announced last week, the LRT’s cost “means that almost all of the \$16 billion earmarked for transit over the next decade is spoken for,” the *Globe & Mail* reported, adding that Del Duca “took umbrage at the suggestion Toronto’s needs were being marginalized, [as he listed] projects proposed or under way as proof of the province’s commitment to the city. ‘The people of our province want us to put progress ahead of politics,’ he said.” The paper also noted that “LRT is not the dirty word here that it has become for much of the Toronto city council.”

According to Metrolinx CEO Bruce McCuaig, 33 million people will be riding the Mississauga-Brampton LRT annually by 2031—about half the total carried now on the entire GO Transit network. A GO Transit service expansion announced last week, which includes electrified Regional Express Rail (RER), is expected to double ridership when it’s completed in 10 years. —*Toronto Star*

More train service in Southwestern Ontario

Lights at the end of the tunnel ?

The Southwestern Ontario Transportation Alliance, meeting in London on Thursday May 7, 2015, welcomed the promise of seven daily trains between London and Toronto by January 2016.

Speaking to the London Chamber of Commerce on April 28, VIA Rail President and CEO Yves Desjardins-Siciliano outlined plans to reroute the Sarnia-Toronto service through Brantford and to add an afternoon train in each direction between London and Toronto.

“These promised additional services are a first step in the right direction, but on their own are not enough to reverse the damage done to our regional economy by past cuts to rail service and by lost intercity bus routes. We must keep up the pressure to ensure that the federal government invests in the resources VIA needs to execute this high performance strategy, and to replace 60-year-old equipment with modern, fully accessible trains.” said Southwestern Ontario Transportation Alliance President Terry Johnson.—www.rtands.com



FAST TRACK

Did you know...

On June 2nd, the last Electric locomotive class Z made it's final trip on the Deux-Montagnes line. The line was shut down during summer and reopend in october with nwely EMU.

And the number is...

1.53

The federal government recently announced a grant of 1.53 billion dollars for Calgary transit green line project.

New transit authority in the Gatineau valley



Transcollines is the latest addition in Québec' transit authority. Since mid-June, residents of 4 municipalities on the outskirts of Gatineau have transit access to Ottawa region urban core. Transit users will benefit of fare integration with Société de transport de l'Outaouais and connection with Rapibus, Gatineau's BRT.

Private school, public bus !

Starting this fall, private College students in Trois-Rivières area will have to use public transit for their daily travel between home and school. School board have recently inform parents that due to major cuts in provincial subsidy, they have made an agreement with public transit authority in Trois-Rivières. Instead of the 700\$ annual fee for carrying their loves ones in a yellow school bus, parents will have to pay 420\$ on regular bus service. ! —www.ici.radio-canada.ca



“ When we expand our highway system, it is always called a critical investment. When we talk about passenger rail and the need for investment in that critical infrastructure, it is described as an endless subsidy”

Canadian innovators in modern rail, like Bombardier, sell their fast and efficient trains to other nations, while our passenger rail system continues to decline and decay. ... Canada's passenger rail service has no legislative framework. VIA is crippled by inadequate investment and a lack of enlightened national rail policy favouring more, not less service”

- Bruce Hyer, MP Thunder Bay-Superior North

Worst transit map ever !



According to the *Transit map blog* on Tumblr, Luxembourg (the city, not the country) transit map is the worst ever made.

The submitter of this map calls it Luxembourg's "spaghetti monster." In the city center, it's very difficult to tell what's going on.

And without any real sense of streets or landmarks, it's hard to begin to use this to navigate in Luxembourg.

This might be fine for locals, but good luck if you're a tourist.



“THERE IS NO PLAN B”

- Gregor Robertson, mayor of Vancouver

TAC AGM in Lévis, QC

A busy year !

Presented at the Annual General Meeting held at Charny (Lévis) on May 9th 2015 with the help of le Groupe TRAQ for which we wish to express our thanks.

Transport Action Canada had a very active year in 2014. Cuts in service to passenger trains of Vias Rail Canada had been made in 2013 in South-Western Ontario and to the frequencies of the transcontinental trains the Canadian and the Ocean. Your association had reacted by creating a programme of Town Hall Meetings (The National Dream Renewed), first in Ontario and the Maritime Provinces and then across Canada, from the Gaspé coast to Vancouver Island with your President. Meetings were held jointly with the Coalition for Algoma Passenger Trains (CAPT) an affiliate of Transport Action Ontario, to rally support for a continuing remote train service on the Algoma Central Railway. Transport Action Canada was concerned by the 'temporary' suspension of train service on the Gaspé line and the threat to the line of the Ocean posed by the projected abandonment of the Newcastle subdivision and cooperated with coalitions of citizens and municipalities in Québec and New Brunswick. ...



DAVID JEANES

We were kept busy with Orleans Express motor coach service reductions and with other files in the field of public transport both urban and rural, sometimes directly as in Ottawa, and elsewhere via our affiliates in Ontario and Québec. We reached an agreement with the TRAQ Group to cooperate in conservation of railway heritage, and we have worked with the Centre for Policy Alternatives in the analysis and documentation of the safety issues in the transport of crude oil.

The members of your Board participated with your Executive Committee in monthly telephone conferences throughout the year and a team of your President, Luc Côté and the Jeanes-Titcomb team edited four monthly issues of your national newsletter. We have the support of three national corporations which give us a wider network and some welcome financial support. After the vote at the last AGM, we submitted our Articles of Continuance under the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act. They took effect on 14 October 2014 and were acknowledged by Corporations Canada and by Canada Revenue Agency Charities Division.


We lost an eminent supporter in the person of Ray Hannon of Texas

in April 2014, he was "a renaissance man" wrote Greg Gormick in his eulogy in our newsletters. Other members disappeared in 2014, and we remember their contributions with thanks. On a more encouraging note, Ms. Elizabeth Hill has recovered a number of lapsed members for which I wish to thank her. Finally, renewal of our Atlantic and Ontario associations with younger active members over the last two years is noteworthy. The new faces are welcome, believe me.



JACQUES VANDERSLEYEN KEYNOTE SPEAKER (picture from David Jeanes)

Departing from our usual practice, at this point in the AGM, we invited our guest speakers to give their presentations. The general theme addressed was the transportation of crude oil by rail. Prof. Jacques Vandersleyen of the University of Quebec argued that Bakken oil shipped by rail should have reduced volatility, indicating ways in which this could be done. He also argued that tank car strength could be significantly improved by adding an underframe to tank cars, a European practice. Bruce Campbell, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, appearing by video-taped interview, argued that Canada's regulatory framework for rail safety, especially regarding the movement of hazardous goods, was weak and flawed, and should have been considered a significant cause in the Lac-Mégantic disaster. Bernard Babin, Lévis, Québec, was concerned that the movement of oil by rail in the Matapedia River Valley poses a significant risk to fish stocks, with ocean fish using this river for spawning. There is a proposal to use harbour facilities at Belledune to transload Alberta crude oil onto ships destined to foreign ports. To receive 220 tank cars a day for transloading, this terminal may open in 2015. —Harry Gow, president of Transport Action Canada

<p>TRANSPORT ACTION is published four times a year by Transport Action Canada (formerly Transport 2000 Canada), a national federation of consumers devoted to the public interest of passenger and freight transportation.</p> <p>TRANSPORT ACTION est publié quatre fois par an par Transport Action Canada, (anciennement Transport 2000 Canada), une fédération nationale d'usagers dont le but est de voir à l'avancement de l'intérêt public en matière de transport des personnes et des marchandises.</p>	<p>BUREAU NATIONAL OFFICE 211 Bronson Ave., Suite 308 Ottawa, ON K1R 6H5</p> <p>MAILING ADDRESS Box 858, Station B Ottawa, ON K1P 5P9 613-594-3290 info@transport-action.ca www.transport-action.ca</p> <p>Print edition ISSN 0227-3020 Online edition ISSN 1923-1547</p>	<p>PRESIDENT Harry Gow VICE-PRESIDENT EAST Marcus Garnet VICE-PRESIDENT WEST Peter Lacey TREASURER David Jeanes SECRETARY Anton (Tony) Turritin PAST PRESIDENT David Jeanes</p> <p>Follow us on</p> 	<h3 style="text-align: center;">Coming soon...</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Annual General Meeting of Transport Action Canada will be held in Charny (Qc) at 8041 avenue des Églises, at 1:00 PM on Saturday May 9th, 2015. • L'AGA de Transport Action Canada aura lieu au 8041, av. des Églises à Charny, Québec le samedi 9 mai 2015 à 13h00.
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