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Dear ,

Quarter 1 is always busy for us as there are new policies, researches that are being published (and with us planning our whole entire year of advocacy efforts). With that being said, we have a lot of updates for you! So here it goes.

**Ontario Community Transportation Grants Released:** Transport Action Ontario warmly welcomes the Ontario government's release of \$30 million in Community Transportation Grant funding on January 25th 2019. We have sent a letter to Minister of Transportation Jeff Yurek congratulating him on this announcement and identifying several other issues with intercommunity buses that need resolution. [Click Here To Read Our Letter + Summary](#)

**Toronto Subway Upload Debate Continues:** The Ontario government is studying the uploading of Toronto's subway system. There are strong opinions both pro and con on this idea. Transport Action Ontario has written a letter, on our website, indicating the concept is worthy of study, and calling for full transparency and public consultation. [Click Here To View Our Letter](#)

**TAA to participate in CBC Radio show on Public Transit:** TAA vice-president Ashley Morton has been invited to appear as a studio guest on the CBC Radio talk show Maritime Noon on March 4th. The program will focus on public transit - both urban and rural - throughout the region. Ashley is a regular and committed user of Halifax Transit. The program airs at 12:00 noon AST on Radio One stations in the Maritimes, and can be heard elsewhere online.

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### **Momentum building on NL ferry rate concerns**

Marine Atlantic published its 2019 rates and schedules for the Newfoundland ferry services on February 7 th . For the first time in many years there was no increase in passenger fares and passenger vehicle rates, no doubt due in part to persistent prodding by Transport Action Atlantic and others about the excessive cost recovery targets set by the federal government.

Another factor is the looming election, and the unfilled promise by the Trudeau Liberals from 2015 to address the issue. That said, there was still a 2% increase in commercial rates which will doubtless be ultimately passed on to

consumers. As the election draws nearer, TAA is continuing to add fuel to the fire by building alliances with various interests concerned about ferry rates - which have more than doubled in the past 20 years. That's about three times the national inflation rate.

### **Election presents opportunity for Maritime VIA commitment**

The federal election campaign also offers an opportunity to exert pressure on Atlantic Liberal MPs seeking to retain their seats to make a commitment on passenger rail. TAA held a 90-minute meeting with Miramichi-Grand Lake MP Pat Finnigan during the recent parliamentary break. He reaffirmed his ongoing support and promised to once again approach Transport Minister Marc Garneau about upgrading service in the Maritimes. TAA has emphasized the political benefits of reinstating daily through service from Halifax to Montreal, to connect with the modernized VIA corridor service, pointing out that it can be accomplished at a very reasonable cost.

### **Island Corridor Rail Service**

Capital Region mayors asked the provincial government get passenger rail service back on the E&N between Langford and Victoria. They have also requested funding for rapid bus lanes along Highway 1. The Mayors tout the benefits of congestion relief, reduced GHG emissions, economic development and more time with families (Victoria Mayor Lisa Helps).

Transport Minister Trevina stated that safety and seismic assessments are necessary to ensure current standards can be met. [Apparently this work is being planned](#) and is expected to take 6 months.

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**CN Rail Vancouver Double-tracking:** The federal government has given CN Rail permission to double-track its line from the Vancouver waterfront, through Strathcona and the Grandview Cut, to Nanaimo Street. [Click Here To Read More](#)

**Ride Hailing:** Another report has linked declining US transit ridership to ride hailing services. University of Kentucky researchers state that observed ridership declines are not just the results of service reductions, fare increases and cheaper gas, but due to ride hailing services. [Click Here To Read more](#)

We'd love to hear what you think! Enjoy reading through these news and updates, and reply back to this email with any thoughts you may have.

*Bruce Budd*

Bruce Budd, President  
Transport Action Canada

**P.S:** Transport Action relies entirely on membership dues and donations to fund its advocacy work. Please consider making a year-end donation so that we can continue our work for the upcoming year to get closer than ever to ensuring accessibility to transportation for all Canadians.

**Any amount--** \$25, \$50, \$100, \$200... Even \$10 will be deeply appreciated, and makes a real impact in our ability to continue our work.

**Donate Now!**

If you prefer to send us a cheque, cheques may be mailed to:  
-- **Transport Action Canada** at P.O. Box 858, Station B, Ottawa K1P 5P9

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