



TRANSPORT ACTION CANADA

Dear ,

Spring is Annual General Meeting season for Transport Action and our regional groups. Save the date for these upcoming events. But first, an update on the federal budget...

High Frequency Rail not in 2019 Federal Budget, Continues to be Evaluated

The Federal Government released its 2019 Budget on March 19th. There had been expectations that the budget would contain a decision on the fate of VIA Rail Canada's \$4bn High Frequency Rail (HFR) project. As discussed in our statement of October 2018, this project envisions new dedicated trackage between Toronto-Ottawa (using the partially abandoned Havelock line) and between Montreal-Quebec (using north shore trackage accessed through the Mt. Royal tunnel), while improving the schedule on existing Lakeshore and South-shore routes.

Our October statement noted that the Federal Government was evaluating this and other proposals to add passenger rail capacity in this corridor. We urged the Federal Government to move forward promptly and commit to boosting passenger rail frequencies, speeds and on-time performance in this corridor.

In contrast to the expectations, the Federal Budget was silent on HFR.

However, in a March 20 article in the Globe and Mail, Infrastructure Minister François-Philippe Champagne is quoted as saying "this is a project that is important from Quebec to Windsor ... so we keep on working with VIA Rail" and that a range of options are being considered. Transport Minister Marc Garneau stated that the Government continues to study VIA Rail's plan, including how HFR could work with the Montreal light rail project to both share the Mt Royal tunnel, and that funding could flow through the recently created Canada Infrastructure Bank.

Transport Action Canada is hopeful that improved passenger rail service in the corridor will be announced in the near future, with VIA Rail's proposal enjoying cross-party support. In the meantime, we continue to celebrate the federal approval in December of nearly \$1 billion to replace VIA Rail's aging corridor fleet, as this is a necessary first step to any service improvement.

Note: Details of the new VIA Rail fleet were presented at the *Next Generation Corridor Equipment Pool Committee* meeting in Washington D.C. on February

Upcoming Meetings

Save these dates:

Transport Action Canada AGM - May 25 - Ottawa

The Hon. **David M. Collenette**, PC, formerly Federal Minister of Transport, Chair of the Mayor of Ottawa's Task Force on Transportation, and Ontario Special Advisor for High Speed Rail, will be our guest speaker at this year's AGM.

Transport Action Canada's annual general meeting will be held on **25 May** at the **Bronson Centre in Ottawa**, (211 Bronson Avenue, Room 110) starting at 1 pm. There will be a report from the president on last year's activities. Transport Action members can vote in person or by proxy to approve the 2018 financial statement and appoint directors for 2019-2020, followed by our guest speaker at 2pm. *Non-members are welcome to attend.*

Transport Action Ontario AGM - May 4 - Toronto

Transport Action Ontario's (TAO) annual general meeting will be held on Saturday, May 4, 2019 at 11:00 am at St. Paul's Bloor Street, 227 Bloor St. E, Toronto. There will be a review of 2018 performance and election of the executive and board of directors for 2019. TAO members can vote in person or by proxy. Non-members are welcome to attend. Our organization is always looking for new members to join our board of directors. If you have a passion for public transportation and want to make a difference, contact us at ontario@transportaction.ca.

We are working towards having a public presentation by an invited guest at 2:00 pm. Details will be in the next newsletter and on the TAO website.

Transport Action Atlantic AGM - May 11 - Halifax

Transport Action Atlantic's annual general meeting will be held at the Halifax North Memorial Library auditorium, 2285 Gottingen Street, on Saturday, 11 May 2019, at 1400.

Current members of Transport Action Atlantic may nominate (with their consent) any other member in good standing for a position on the board. It is the board's responsibility to choose the executive officers. Nominations should be made in advance of the meeting, and may be submitted by mail to the TAA Nominating Committee, P.O. Box 268, Dartmouth NS B2Y 3Y3, or by e-mail to donlinmacleod@ns.sympatico.ca.

Besides the required business, the agenda will include a panel of speakers who will focus on critical public transportation issues in our region, with ample opportunity for discussion.

Transportation Newsround

Ms. Cynthia Garneau appointed as President and Chief Executive Officer of VIA Rail Canada for a term of five years starting on May 9, 2019

<https://www.railcan.ca/news/cynthia-garneau-appointed-as-president-and-ceo-of-via-rail-as-of-may-9-2019/>

TSB sends letter to CN regarding two incidents where stray tie plates have damaged VIA trains.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/5107967/transportation-safety-board-railway-ties-incidents/>

The Canada Transportation Agency looking for input on universal accessibility for public transportation

<https://bc.ctvnews.ca/canada-looking-for-input-on-making-travel-network-most-accessible-in-the-world-1.4331479>

Veterans Affairs is partnering with VIA Rail Canada to run a commemorative train and series of events across Canada in the run up to the 75th anniversary of D-Day

<https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/history/second-world-war/d-day/75th-anniversary/events-canada>

CN investing in new double track segments in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta (*Dare we hope for fewer delays to the Canadian?*)

<https://transportationtodaynews.com/news/12345-cn-plans-120m-investment-into-manitoba-rail-infrastructure/>

<https://www.producer.com/2019/03/cn-to-expand-infrastructure-in-sask/>

<https://www.canadianshipper.com/transportation-and-logistics/cn-invest-320-million-alberta/1003376991/>

Redfin Unveils the Best Canadian Cities for Public Transit in 2019

<https://www.redfin.com/blog/best-cities-canada-public-transit-score>

Revival of Tisdale East subdivision would streamline freight movements to Churchill

<https://www.humboldtjournal.ca/news/closed-railway-could-cut-200-miles-on-way-to-churchill-1.23772005>

Funding secured for Edmonton LRT expansion

<https://www.railjournal.com/regions/north-america/funding-secured-for-edmonton-light-rail-expansion/>

Second incident in two weeks disrupts VIA Maritime service

<https://globalnews.ca/news/5144111/investigation-train-derailment-moncton/>

St. John's City Council votes unanimously to seek action on escalating NL ferry rates

<https://www.thetelegram.com/news/local/st-johns-deputy-mayor-wants-ferry-break-289458/>

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 Canada is funded by grassroots members and donors like you.

Support our mission to ensure access to bus and rail services for to all Canadians by making a contribution.

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!

Can't spare a buck right now? You can help by recruiting a friend to join our fight for better public transportation across Canada...

Join Transport Action

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

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