

This newsletter is produced by Transport Action Canada for all members of the Transport Action family. If you are a member of Transport Action Atlantic, Ontario, Prairies or BC, you are automatically a member of Transport Action Canada. The regional organizations have chosen to issue a joint electronic newsletter covering all of Canada.

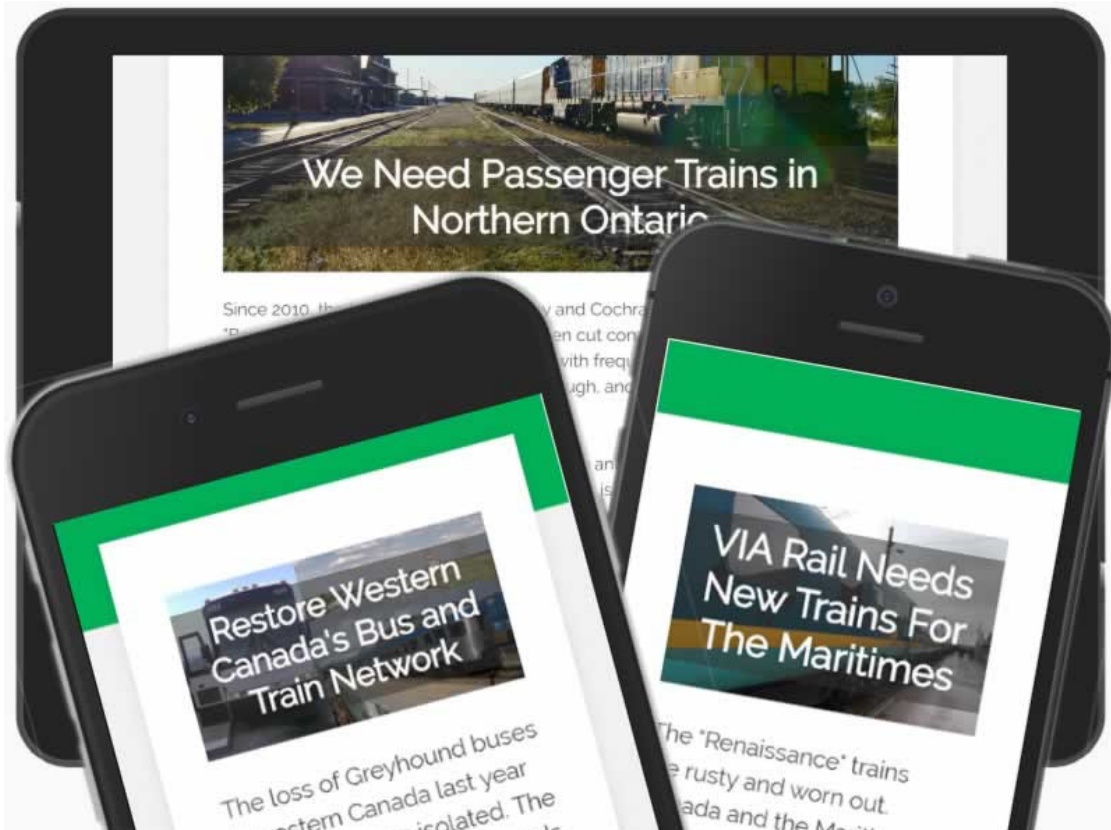


TRANSPORT ACTION  
CANADA

Dear ,

Thank you for supporting our letter-writing campaigns during the federal election. **Candidates from coast to coast received more than 1,000 letters and emails about passenger rail and bus services.**

Of course, we *don't stop* here - because buses and trains *don't stop* in far too many of our communities - and we're going to be reaching out to elected MPs to follow up, and launching additional campaigns on regional issues.



With a minority government, there's a lot of opportunity to raise regional issues and have them taken seriously, whether its the restoration of the Vancouver Island passenger train, bus services across Alberta and the Prairies, or the

need to save the Cape Breton railway and restore fair ferry rates between Cape Breton and Newfoundland.

But first, we need you...

## Help Wanted: Join Transport Action's Board

We are seeking new board members to help carry forward our campaign priorities and build a diverse and active board with representation from coast to coast. We particularly need more representation from western Canada.

Apart from our Annual General Meeting, monthly meetings are held by video conference and business conducted mostly by email, so sorry, you won't get to ride the train to every meeting, but it does mean that you can attend from anywhere in the country.

Here are some of the campaign priorities you'll be helping us to advance:

- Restoring a nationwide network of bus and rail services, to fill the gap left by Greyhound and fulfill the responsibility to provide safe transportation options to all Canadians.
- Ordering new sleepers, accessible sleepers, and dining cars to replace the "Renaissance" cars before they wear out and leave VIA Rail without enough equipment to deliver reliable long-distance service.
- Providing regulatory support for passenger rail to ensure track access and on-time service, backed by investment support for freight railroads.
- Making Newfoundland ferry rates reasonable and affordable again, as mandated by the Terms of Union.
- Securing the future of the Cape Breton rail network.
- Delivering an integrated network plan for Southwestern Ontario.

If you would like to find out more about joining our board, please reply to this email to write to [info@transportaction.ca](mailto:info@transportaction.ca) and let us know a bit about yourself. The next meeting will be on Monday November 18th at 8pm Eastern / 5pm Pacific.

## Transport Action Ontario meets with Ontario Ministry of Transportation

The Ontario government is expected to release two significant documents in the next few weeks: The business plan for restoring the Northlander train between Toronto, North Bay and Cochrane; and a new regional transportation plan for Southwestern Ontario to replace the cancelled High Speed Rail project.

To discuss these policies and follow up on our letter of July 10th, Peter Miasek from **Transport Action Ontario**, accompanied by Terry Johnson, Bruce Budd and Ken Westcar, met with Kailey Vokes, Director of Policy in Minister Caroline Mulroney's office, and her colleague Rob Elliott on Wednesday August 16th.

We believe the discussion was positive and constructive, and so we await the release of the plan for Southwestern Ontario with cautious optimism that the work of advocates across the region calling for for a high performance rail and integrated bus network will have been heeded.

The issue of latest abandonment threat to the Huron Central Railway was also raised, with the suggestion that consideration be given to transferring operation of the route to Ontario Northland.

Transport Action Ontario will be seeking a further meeting to discuss GTHA transit issues.

## Island Corridor Foundation Awaits results of Study

Larry Stevenson, CEO of the **Island Corridor Foundation** expressed optimism about the results of the most recent engineering assessment of the E&N Railway in a presentation to Esquimalt Council on October 28th.

The study, which began after Premier John Horgan met with area mayors in the spring, is expected to be complete by the end of the year. It will identify infrastructure requirements and upgrades needed to restore rail service from Langford to Victoria, and eventually to Nanaimo.

The future value of the rail corridor as the population grows and the economy moves to decarbonize was highlighted as an opportunity, and Premier John Horgan previously promised to restore rail on the island in his first term of office.

**"There is overwhelming support to put rail back on the island"**

You can watch Larry Stevenson's presentation to Esquimalt Council here: [Video Link](#)

## John Bakker Proposes Electrification for Western Canada



Left to right: Michael Kostiuk, Tim Lane, Carolyn Clackdoyle, Mark Walton, John Bakker, David Leibold, and David Jeanes

John Bakker, Emeritus Professor of Civil Engineering at the University of Alberta, and past Western vice-president of Transport Action Canada, now resident in the Vancouver area, spoke on the subject of Transportation Electrification Strategies for Western Canada, discussing passenger rail, urban light rail, and freight, with Transport Action Members in Toronto on Wednesday October 23rd, and in Ottawa on Friday October 25th.

John served as civil engineering consultant for the Edmonton LRT, North America's first modern light rail system, in 1978. Together with John Schnablegger, he also authored Ottawa's 1996 Rapid Transit study

## Conflicting reports on the progress of REM

Reports suggest that the Réseau express métropolitain (REM) project in Montreal is running into difficulties with safety measures to allow the emergency evacuation of closely spaced trains in the Mount Royal Tunnel which could delay the project by as much as two years, and have unknown consequences for ever being able to share the tunnel with VIA Rail's HFR trains to Quebec City, as has been previously promised. However, the Caisse and Quebec government maintain that everything is going to according to plan.

<https://www.lapresse.ca/actualites/enquetes/201910/01/01-5243546-rem-deux-ans-de-plus-pour-securiser-le-tunnel.php>

<https://montrealgazette.com/business/local-business/rem-is-on-track-to-open-by-the-end-of-2021-caisse-insists>

<https://globalnews.ca/video/6036336/rem-work-right-on-track-says-minister-despite-recent-reports-suggesting-otherwise>

<https://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/businesses-brace-for-traffic-hell-when-mount-royal-tunnel-shuts>

<https://montreal.ctvnews.ca/liquid-concrete-showers-cars-beneath-construction-site-on-highway-40-1.4652783>

<https://www.iheartradio.ca/cjad/news/west-island-commuters-worried-they-may-not-see-rem-service-until-2023-1.3617479>

## Federal Court of Appeal Upholds Decision on Newfoundland Ferry Rates

The privately-owned shipping company that has been that has been trying to force publicly-owned Marine Atlantic to charge higher commercial rates on the constitutional Newfoundland ferry service suffered another setback in the courts on October 10. The Federal Court of Appeal dismissed an appeal lodged by Oceanex against an earlier judgement in March 2018 by Justice Cecily Strickland. Judge Strickland ruled that the compensatory rate provisions in the *Canada Transportation Act* did not override the Terms of Union that brought Newfoundland and Labrador into Confederation in 1949, and the appeal panel upheld that interpretation.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/oceanex-marine-atlantic-federal-court-appeal-1.5320956>

## No extra Ocean train this Christmas





Once again, would-be train travellers in the Maritimes won't have any additional departures to choose from this holiday season. While there will be some variance from the usual Sunday-Wednesday-Thursday schedule because of the way Christmas and New Year fall on the calendar in 2019, there will be no additional trains during this busy travel period, as there were from 2013 to 2017.

This is presumably due to VIA's ongoing equipment crunch, which has left the company unable to field two complete serviceable sets of Renaissance cars, resulting in one consist of the tri-weekly Ocean having to be supplemented with Budd stainless steel sleepers and coaches. While these 1950s-era cars are more reliable than their newer British-built travelling companions, it's clearly evident that far too much time has passed since they last underwent a much-needed full interior refurbishing. The "hybrid" consist of Budd and Renaissance rolling stock is part of the plan for the foreseeable future, and VIA Rail has previously stated that the remaining Renaissance cars will be withdrawn by 2021, hence our campaign for new long distance equipment.

## Transportation Newsround

"Never say never" to a restored rail link between Ottawa and Gatineau.

<https://ottawacitizen.com/opinion/columnists/adam-never-say-never-to-a-rail-link-along-the-prince-of-wales-bridge>

Langley marks 70 years since the loss of passenger rail, as advocates promote the restoration of LRT or regional rail service in the route.

<https://www.aldergrovestar.com/news/langley-passenger-rail-service-marks-nearly-70-years-since-termination/>

CN ignoring essential service obligation to BC first nations.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/shalalth-seton-portage-1.5323710>

Gaspé shuttle a success, will return for Christmas season.

<https://www.gaspetrain.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/ReGIMs-summer-shuttle-service-was-a-success.pdf>

Cochrane, AB, launches on-demand local transit powered by RideCo software.

<https://calgary.ctvnews.ca/colt-transit-on-demand-launches-in-cochrane-1.4626502>

Metrolinx downplays concerns over Ottawa's LRT teething troubles.

<https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2019/10/12/metrolinx-not-concerned-about-ottawa-lrt-issues-despite-having-order-in-for-the-same-vehicles.html>

TTC and Metrolinx at odds over losses from faulty Presto machines.

<https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2019/10/22/ttc-losses-from-faulty-presto-machines-does-not-appear-to-be-overstated-says-torontos-auditor-general.html>

Autonomous shuttles being considered for last-mile connections.

<https://www.railtech.com/policy/2019/10/21/railway-operators-examine-autonomous-shuttles-for-last-mile>

LA-Vegas high speed rail proposal gets back on track with Virgin Trains

<https://www.railjournal.com/passenger/high-speed/construction-of-southern-california-las-vegas-high-speed-line-to-start-next-year/>

We love to hear what you think! We hope you enjoyed reading this newsletter. Reply to this email with any thoughts you may have, and your own local transport and advocacy updates.

Thanks for reading!



Terry Johnson  
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!\*\*](#)

Our membership is our strength. 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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