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Thursday, July 6, 2023

The Honorable Omar Alghabra
Minister of Transportation
330 Sparks Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0N5

Dear Minister Alghabra:

We wish to add our voices to the growing chorus of people in Quebec's Gaspé region seeking the progressive restoration of passenger rail service.

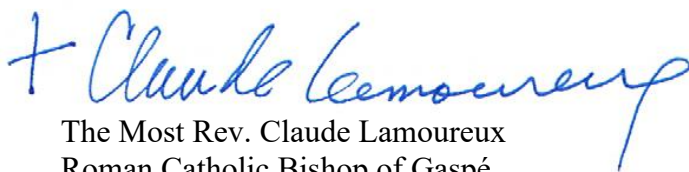
As you are well aware, Via Rail suspended its passenger service to this region in 2013. Air Canada eliminated Gaspé as a destination in 2020. Orléans Express threatened to cancel passenger bus service to the area in 2021. Affordable means of collective transportation for the people of this region are continually shrinking and increasingly precarious.


More than simply a mode of transportation, passenger rail service would contribute to the growth and flourishing of the Gaspé and its people. It represents an accessible, affordable, reliable, and ecological means of connecting this region to the rest of Quebec and Canada. As it did before, the train would connect patients to vital health care services, connect families and friends, and connect visitors to our local economy.

Infrastructure repairs already completed will allow passenger rail service to soon resume between Matapédia and New Carlisle. Therefore, Minister, please exhort Via Rail to restart its service to the Gaspé region on a progressive basis, committing to fully restore passenger service to its previous terminus in the town of Gaspé as soon as the necessary repairs to tracks and bridges allow. A failure to do so will only further stymie the growth and flourishing of the Gaspé and its people, even as the region experiences a modest but promising growth in its population.

As representatives of institutions and communities deeply rooted in and committed to the Gaspé, we implore you to immediately—and literally—get Via Rail back on track in this region.

Sincerely yours,


The Most Rev. Claude Lamoureux
Roman Catholic Bishop of Gaspé


The Right Rev. Bruce Myers
Anglican Bishop of Quebec

cc: The Hon. Diane Lebouthillier, MP, Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine
Mrs. Geneviève Guilbault, Quebec Minister of Transport and Sustainable Mobility