



## **VIA Rail Canada passenger train service on the Gaspé Peninsula.**

Mr. Prime Minister of Canada

In September 2013 VIA Rail Canada passenger service was suspended in the Gaspé Peninsula. Train service between Matapédia and Gaspé was cancelled in large part due to the disrepair of the railway bridges. The Federal government has not provided any financial support to the line since 2011. Despite this, the railroad bed itself remains in good shape. A freight train uses part of the line, mainly between Matapédia and Nouvelle, and sometimes further east to New Richmond and Caplan.

In May 2015 the Quebec government bought the Matapédia to Gaspé line to ensure its future. The Quebec government has already invested money on repairs. The situation requires the involvement of the Federal government in order to facilitate the required upgrade and maintenance of the Matapédia to Gaspé line. We need your government to get involved in this important issue. The Gaspé Peninsula needs its passenger train service restored as soon as possible for a variety of reasons.

### **1. Healthcare**

The Gaspé Peninsula has an aging population. Many of us have to travel great distances for medicare. A lot of people who have cancer or heart trouble have to travel to Rimouski, Quebec City, or Montreal for treatment. The train provides them with a safe and comfortable form of transportation especially during the winter.

### **2. Tourism**

The Gaspé Peninsula is one of the biggest tourist attractions in the province of Quebec. So many people like to come to the Gaspé Peninsula by train every chance they get to visit family and friends. Many people living here like to take the train to go away to visit family and friends all over Canada. Railfans from all over the world recognize the Gaspé line as a must see, visiting the Gaspé coast at least once a year just to take a ride on the line. In addition, train is one of the safest ways for people to travel.

### **3. Education**

Many young people living here have to finish their education away from home. The train is the best way for them to travel home often to see their families. Many teachers have to travel to Montreal regularly for conventions.

### **4. Jobs**

The train is good for the economy of the region. It is used for those that have to travel in and out of the region as an affordable means of travel. When the passenger train is running between Matapédia and Gaspé it creates jobs. Many people work on the train, at stations, and on track maintenance. These jobs were lost in 2013.

Moreover, since 2012, 6,000 people have chosen the Gaspé Peninsula to settle. Those newcomers mean a lot for the future of the region. Considering that a good part of them are not originally from the area, they will travel between the region and the rest of country to visit relatives. A passenger train offers them a safe and environmentally friendly transportation mode to travel.

### **5. Environment**

Climate change and global warming are very serious problems faced today. The train is good for the environment it takes cars off the road. When a lot of people are taking the train you just simply add extra coaches.

### **6. Ridership**

The Gaspé Peninsula needs its train! Many people use the train service. The ridership numbers speak for themselves. During the nine year period from 2004 to 2013 the Montreal-Gaspé train had better ridership than the other two regional trains in Quebec, the Montreal-Jonquiere and Montreal-Senneterre. In 2011 the Montreal-Gaspé train carried 27,991 passengers. In 2011 the Montreal-Jonquiere and Montreal-Senneterre trains together carried 25,870 passengers. During that year our train carried more passengers than the other 2 trains put together.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City or Municipality \_\_\_\_\_

Province / Postal code \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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