
Alto High Speed Rail Project

1 message

FR Jelfs <j0458@telus.net>

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The Honourable Terry Beech,
The Honourable Hedy Fry,
The Honourable Stephen Fuhr,
The Honourable Jill McKnight,
The Honourable Stephanie McLean,
The Honourable Gregor Robertson,
The Honourable Randeep Sarai,
The Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson,
Parm Bains, Wade Chang,
Sukh Dhaliwal, Wade Grant, Will Greaves,
Ernie Klassen, Ron McKinnon,
Taleeb Noormohamed, Zoe Royer,
Gurbux Saini, Jake Sawatzky,
Patrick Weiler.

Dear B.C. Liberal MPs and Honourable Cabinet Ministers,

Transport Action British Columbia (TABC) is a long-standing, volunteer-based, non-partisan group advocating for improved rail and bus services in British Columbia. We are affiliated with the national organisation, Transport Action Canada (TAC).

Your government is hyping the Alto HSR Project as a nation-building project. However, the current phase only links 2 provinces, which already have 400 weekly passenger trains and new Siemens Venture trains to operate many of them. This is hardly nation building on the scale of the 19th and 20th century rail projects that linked the country from coast-to-coast.

The government also points to its Canada Strong Pass, an idea with merit, but hardly of much use to Western Canadians where Via runs no daily services. And the much-discussed *Canadian*, is a luxury tourist train with fares to match, hardly something for an average Canadian family to consider.

Your government is missing in action when it comes to passenger rail in Western Canada. Vancouver Island's Island Corridor continues to moulder away; there are no remote services serving the remote communities along the former BC Rail line, which we are in danger of losing because no government seems interested in saving it; restarting Via's service on the CPKC route would link Vancouver, Kamloops, Revelstoke, Banff and Calgary; the *Skeena* would be much more useful to Northern B.C. if it was reinstated to its former terminus in Edmonton. All projects worth considering but we get naught from the federal government.

The embarrassing truth is that U.S. governments provide more daily passenger train service in British Columbia than Canadian governments do.

On the freight side, things may be marginally better because the railways have a vested interest in maintaining their assets. However, the 100+ year old, single track, New Westminster railway bridge serves four freight railways leading to the Port of Vancouver and is a major bottleneck. Another bottleneck is the single-track tunnel and bridge to the port's North Shore which may have contributed to Nutrien's decision to ship potash through the U.S.

Using the BC Rail line as a link to support resource development in Northern B.C., as a resiliency option to be protected for use when rockslides and/or floods shut down Canada's two major railways, and as an alternate route to the North Vancouver shipping facilities does not seem to have entered your government's nation building agenda.

Transport Action Canada produced the [Beyond HFR](#) report ([Beyond-HFR_en-ca.pdf](#)) which documents several rail infrastructure projects that benefit rail in B.C. The report was submitted to the federal government, but no action was taken.

Transport Action B.C. has written to various Department of Transport Ministers suggesting rail infrastructure improvements needed south of Vancouver with no apparent result. ([Rail improvements needed to support FIFA World Cup – Transport Action British Columbia, Rail Improvements Required South of Vancouver – Transport Action British Columbia](#))

Canada needs a national rail strategy that serves both freight and passenger users, public and private operators, and supports Canadian community, environmental, and social needs. Canada's rail infrastructure should not be solely determined by the, mostly, foreign shareholders who are only concerned with return on capital and not the national interest. This need is expanded on in Transport Action Canada's November 14, 2025 letter (attached) to the Minister of Transportation, The Honourable Steven McKinnon.

Also needed are MPs from B.C. willing to stand up for B.C. and demand the rail investment needed to support B.C.'s economy.

Sincerely,
Rick Jelfs,
Secretary - Transport Action British Columbia
#221 - 1715 West 11th Ave.,
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 **TAC letter to Minister Steven McKinnon on national rail strategy final.pdf**
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