

October 10, 2024

The Honorable Anita Anand
Minister of Transport
330 Sparks Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0N5
Canada

RE: In support of a High-Frequency Passenger Rail Project in the Toronto-Quebec City Corridor

Dear Minister Anand,

We are writing on behalf of the businesses and communities located in the Toronto-Quebec City corridor, a region that is home to nearly 18 million people and generates 40% of Canada's GDP. Together, we wish to express our enthusiastic support for VIA-HFR's project.

A high-speed passenger rail project has the potential to transform travel within this economically significant region, where population growth is expected to rise by an additional 6 million residents over the next two decades. The need for an efficient, well-integrated, and sustainable transportation system has never been more critical.

Canada is facing a significant productivity crisis. We are following behind peer jurisdictions in the United States and Europe where we have seen the tremendous benefits of a robust network of high speed and high frequency trains – such as the Acela Express corridor in the U.S. The HFR project is our opportunity to develop a similar world-class system, promising substantial improvements in both speed and reliability, and greater connection to our airports, leading to positive outcomes for businesses and residents alike.

We also want to emphasize the importance of speed in the designing of this project. To offer a credible alternative to car travel, it is essential that the VIA HRF project offer competitive travel times for downtown to downtown connections.

This also comes with environmental advantages that are aligned with Canada's commitment to sustainability. By reducing reliance on cars for intercity travel, the project will contribute to a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, helping Canada meet its climate goals while offering a greener mode of transportation for millions.

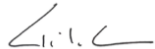
The HFR project, as part of an integrated transportation network will:

- Position the corridor as a global business hub, attracting new investment, entrepreneurs, students and talent
- Enhance our reputation as a bold, competitive, forward-thinking nation, making innovative infrastructure investments
- Increase our visitor economy which adds net new revenue to our economy and acts as the front door to other forms of economic growth
- Demonstrate leadership and inspire confidence in the local and global marketplace as it relates to commitment to inclusivity, productivity and sustainability
- Reinforcing our Canadian value chain in the rail sector

As the chambers of commerce and boards of trade representing businesses in this region, we strongly urge the government of Canada to support the VIA Rail High Frequency Rail project, which will unlock the full economic potential of the Toronto-Quebec City corridor. By enhancing connectivity, reducing travel times, and alleviating congestion this is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to modernize our rail infrastructure and ensure a prosperous and sustainable future for one of the country's most important economic regions.

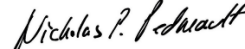
We look forward to your leadership in advancing this transformative, and legacy building project.

Giles Gherson



President and CEO
Toronto Region Board of Trade

Nicholas Pedneault



President
Chambre de commerce & d'industrie de
Québec

Michel Leblanc



President and CEO
La Chambre de commerce du Montréal
métropolitain

JP Martin



President
Chambre de commerce et d'industries de
Trois-Rivières

Sueling Ching



President and CEO
Ottawa Board of Trade