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Railcar project between Matapédia and Gaspé Positive meeting with Minister Poëti

GASPÉ— The Quebec Minister of Transport, Robert Poëti, intends to maximize railroad development in the Gaspé Peninsula. This was apparent following the meeting held on June 30 in Quebec City between Mr. Poëti; the MP for Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Philip Toone; and Gilles Lamy and Bernard Babin, representatives from the Gaspé Coalition for the future of the passengers train.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the project to restore VIA Rail passenger train service between Matapédia and Gaspé using Rail Diesel Cars (RDCs), also known as Budd cars. These cars weigh only 54 tonnes, half as much as a traditional locomotive, and they have a seating capacity of 70. Similar railcars are currently in use between Sudbury and White River.

The representatives from the Gaspé region were pleased with the outcome of the meeting. “The Minister was very supportive of our project,” said Philip Toone. “It is a good fit with the rail development plan for the region.” He added that he believes the Minister will take concrete steps toward achieving this project shortly.

The last step will be to convince VIA Rail to support the project. “VIA Rail representatives have publicly stated that they would be willing to reinstate service to the region when the track is safe,” he said. “If Quebec, which owns the Gaspé train tracks, is on board and confirms that the railway is safe for our project, it will be very difficult for VIA Rail to back down.”

In 2011, close to 28,000 passengers used VIA Rail in the Gaspé region, which is more than the two other routes that travel to remote regions of Quebec combined, from Montreal to Jonquière and from Montreal to Senneterre.

For more information about this project, please visit the website of the Gaspé Coalition for the future of the passengers train at www.gaspetrain.org.

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