



Return of passenger train reiterated by VIA Rail in annual meeting report

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NEW CARLISLE: – VIA Rail’s management has repeatedly said over the last four years that the Gaspé Peninsula passenger train service will be restored once the line is safe for users. In a written document issued recently and presenting the questions asked by the public during the transporter’s annual general meeting, VIA Rail reiterates the statements made since 2016 inclusively.

To the questions “when will services resume in the Gaspé?” and “will the Chaleur train resume services in Gaspésie in 2020, even partially?”, an executive replied that “the tracks on which VIA Rail operates in the Gaspésie region are owned by the Quebec government.

Services in the Gaspé Peninsula have been suspended since September 2013 due to the state of the infrastructure, which was deemed unsafe for passenger transportation.

In April 2018, the government of Quebec announced the beginning of repairs on the segment between Matapédia and Caplan. Once the work is completed and the tracks are deemed safe for passenger transportation, VIA Rail intends to restore services in that area.”

Moreover, in reference to



VIA Rail will come back with its passenger train once a date is set for the return to Gaspé.

the second question, the former president of VIA Rail, Yves Desjardins-Siciliano, had stated in October 2018 during a visit to Rail GD in New Richmond that the transporter was open to a “partial” return to the Gaspé Peninsula, namely to New Carlisle, as long as a date of return to Gaspé is determined by Transports Québec.

Mr. Desjardins-Siciliano stated that in addition to line safety and access to Gaspé (the largest market between Matapédia and the tip of the region) a decent travelling speed ranks among the conditions imposed by VIA Rail for the return between Matapédia and Gaspé.

The VIA Rail train service has been suspended between New Carlisle and Gaspé since

December 2011. It was replaced by a bus service. In fact, VIA Rail’s service between Matapédia and New Carlisle was offered by bus from the beginning of August to the end of September 2013 because the former management of then line owner Gaspésie Railway Society had given the green light to the spreading of a saline solution as defoliant. That solution caused damage to certain grade crossing signals.

