

\$872M railway investment draws online criticism

● NELSON SERGERIE

PORT-DANIEL-GASCONS - The June 27 announcement by Quebec Minister of Transport, Geneviève Guilbault, of \$872 million toward the refurbishment of the Gaspé Peninsula railway, has gained negative attention on social media. Some citizens on social media suggested that the money would perhaps have been better invested in “higher priority” sectors.

Many citizens online voiced their frustration and indicated that the Government of Quebec should have invested the money in education, health, or even in the maintenance of the road network, with some mentioning the horrible state of the bridge over the Petit Pabos River, in Chandler as an example.

Nonetheless, both the Members of the National Assembly (MNA) for Bonaventure and the mayor of Gaspé, believe that the priorities addressed by citizens and investments in rail can be accomplished in parallel.

“You can always do all sorts of things with money. We believe that the rehabilitation project for the Gaspé

Peninsula railway is structured for the entire region and has been expected for years. We promised to deliver the train to Gaspé as quickly as possible. We have proven it with nearly a billion (dollars) in investments. By 2026, we want it to be completed to Gaspé,” says the MNA for Bonaventure, Catherine Blouin.

The Mayor of Gaspé, Daniel Côté has been fighting to see the train in Gaspé since his first election in 2013.

“The railway is a major lever for economic development. We have to linger on it. Consider air travel. You have to look at the hospitals. You have to focus on education. We have to pay attention to our roads. We must focus on the housing file. In short, there are several files on which we must dwell and one does not exclude the other,” says Mr. Côté.

“If there is a railway, that means more economic development, therefore more motivation for housing developers. All in all, for me, these are all great announcements and they are all opportunities to develop our beautiful Gaspé Peninsula,” concluded the mayor.