

Calls for the creation of a rail herbicide committee

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GASPÉ - An environmental group is calling for the creation of a committee to find alternatives to the usage of herbicides on the Gaspé railroad.

This is the suggestion of Together for the Sustainable Future of Greater Gaspé, which is interested in the issue of rail transport in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

"In order to make progress on a file that has been dragging on for ten years, we are calling for the creation of a committee that would include, for example, a liaison officer from the Ministry of the Environment, the office of (Gaspé Member of the National Assembly, Stéphane) Sainte-Croix and people who are concerned about this issue, in order to come up with solutions," says Lise Chartrand, President of

Together for the Sustainable Future of Greater Gaspé.

The group welcomes the fact that the president of the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie, Éric Dubé, is discussing the subject and remembers his comments to the effect that he is looking for more ecological alternatives.

"He said it was difficult and costly, and that the rail industry was looking at what was being done. We've heard that before. What we need to do is look at the proposals and come up with something different for the return of the train to the Gaspésie," adds Ms. Chartrand, especially since trains are scheduled to return to Gaspé by December 2026.

"There are new alternatives. In agriculture, for example, there are weeding robots, electric pulses, and laser beams. Let's seriously sit down with the specialists so that we do

things differently," concludes Ms. Chartrand.

On July 10, The Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie began its annual rail vegetation control program to eliminate weeds on the ballast of the rail corridor to ensure the safety of the public and employees.

A public notice stated that "if it is not eliminated, this vegetation can notably fuel fires along the track and affect the quality of railway infrastructure inspections."

The rail vegetation control program will run until August 31 on the entire railway section, from Matapédia to Gaspé. Recently, Mr. Dubé noted that there are no other cost-effective measures that could achieve similar results as the spreading of herbicides. He also noted that the SCFG will continue to reduce or improve methods to use less and less herbicides.