

Politicians to press for the return of the passenger train

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NEW RICHMOND - Actions will be taken this fall to convince VIA Rail to return its passenger service to the Gaspé Peninsula.

The Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie will be developing a strategy to do just that, while the government of Quebec has compromised on the sums to be invested and a timetable set to get the train to Gaspé by the end of 2026.

The president of the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie, Éric Dubé, says that the organization has been waiting for this signal to get moving. "We're going to arrive with a political alignment. It's the board of directors made up of local politicians who will establish a strategy where everything will be on the table: the stages, the Coalition for the



Photo: Taylor Main / Coalition des Gaspésiens for the return of the Via Rail passenger train

One of the last VIA Rail trains to have run in Gaspé Peninsula in August 2013 in New Carlisle.

return of the train which says that there should at least be a return to New Carlisle. We're going to work and we want to come up with a project this fall that will show our commitment," explains the president.

Mr. Dubé assures that the renovated rail's load-bearing capacity and speed will allow VIA to once again operate in the Gaspé Peninsula.

"All of this was part of the discussions with Quebec, so that we could be sure that as

long as we repair, we do it well and to the maximum with the load capacity and speed taken into account for the transport of passengers," says Mr. Dubé.

VIA Rail says it wants to return to the region once the

rail has been renovated to Gaspé. Last June, at a press conference in Gaspé, Quebec increased the envelope reserved to \$872 million for its repairs.

Work on the refurbishment of the rail continues on section 2 between Caplan and Port-Daniel-Gascons.

"There are still several tens of millions of dollars to be allocated as contracts for the ministry to meet its 2024 deadline for Port-Daniel," mentions the president.

"With all this, I am still 100 times more confident that the goal will be achieved, that by the end of 2024, we'll be able to run a train all the way to the cement plant in Port-Daniel. It gives a good alignment for the third section. We are working in collaboration with the MTQ (Quebec Transport Ministry) on this section," says Mr. Dubé.