RAILWAY REFURBISHMENT:
Diane Lebouthillier remains doubtful

GILLES **GAGNÉ**

PORT DANIEL – Despite the fact that between 2017 and 2026, more than $900 million will have been invested in the Gaspé Peninsula railroad, Canada Revenue Agency Minister Diane Lebouthillier is still doubtful about the eventual completion of the line's refurbishment. In January, she made headlines after saying "good luck," when asked about the railway file. The Société du chemin de la Gaspésie management and Transports Québec, organizations that are deeply involved in the rehabilitation of the regional railway were quite taken aback by her remarks.

She was targeting the part of the railway located between the Port Daniel cement plant and Gaspé which were damaged after the December 24 storm. A few metres of tracks were left hanging in the Pabos area following the huge storm.

Photo: G. Gagné

Diane Lebouthillier still says that she will believe in the rehabilitation of the railroad over its full length only once it is completed.

On July 4, after the federal government announcement of a $10 million contribution from her federal government to a $15 million retaining wall in Port Daniel, and only a week after confirmation from the Quebec government that the rehabilitation project would be completed by December 2026,

Minister Lebouthillier was asked, if she still has doubts about the feasibility of the initiative. She maintained her January position. "I'll believe it when I see it."

It should also be mentioned that in August 2019, her own government announced $45.8 million to counter the effects of

erosion on the section of the railroad she entertains doubts about. That $45.8 million is not included in the Transports Québec amount of $872 million announced on June 27 in Gaspé by Minister Geneviève

Guilbault. She also specified then that a $40 million budget handed out to the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie to cover some smaller refurbishment projects is excluded from the $872 million amount.

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