

Transports Québec transfers \$35M worth of work to the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie

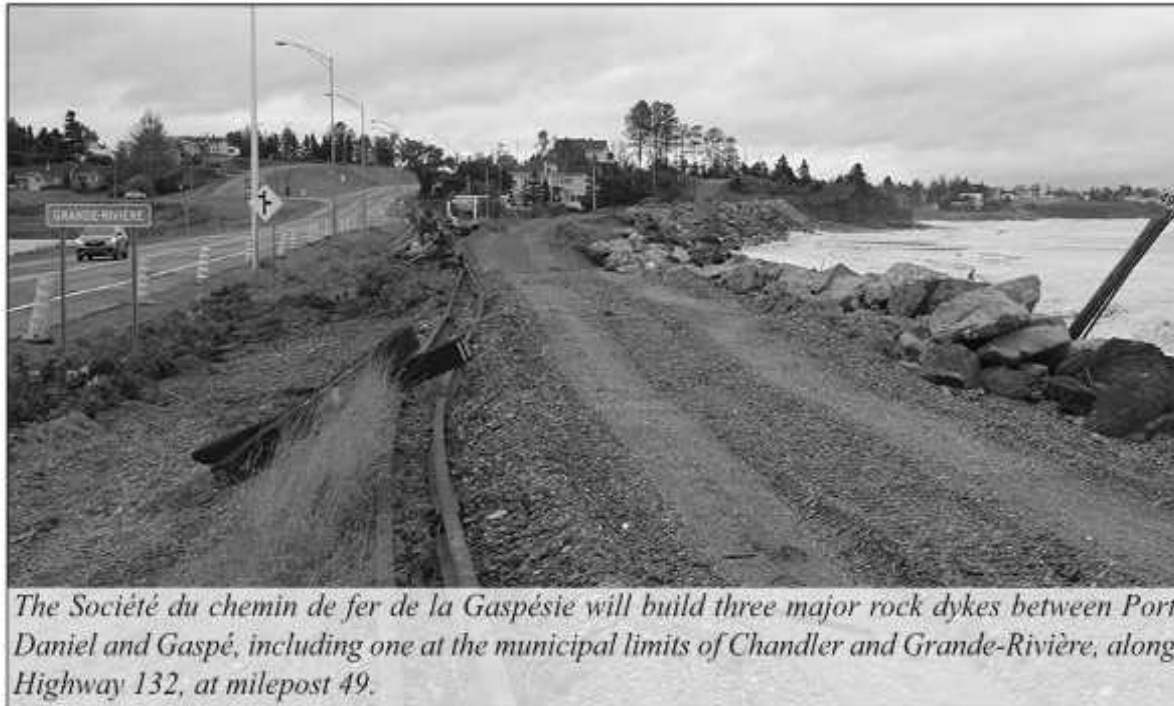
GILLES GAGNÉ

CHANDLER — Transports Québec recently announced the signing of a \$35 million agreement with the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie as part of the rehabilitation project of the railway. The agreement will allow various work to be carried out on the line section between Port-Daniel and Gaspé.

One of the main responsibilities transferred to the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie (SCFG) will be the erection of three rock dykes between Newport and Gaspé. Other interventions include the replacement of culverts and rails, improvement of drainage and raising of ballast.

The SCFG had already secured two important amounts at the end of 2022 and earlier this year, \$19 million for railroad maintenance and \$21 million for operating expenses, which includes money to make up for the loss of traffic revenues attributable to delays in the revamping of the Matapédia to Gaspé line.

“The sum of \$35 million is added to the \$19 million already announced. It is the same model but this time around, it will apply to the Port Daniel-Gaspé section of the line, designated as the third section,”



The Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie will build three major rock dykes between Port Daniel and Gaspé, including one at the municipal limits of Chandler and Grande-Rivière, along Highway 132, at milepost 49.

Photo: G. Gagné

points out Eric Dubé, president of the SCFG.

“Work is already underway on the three rock dykes. We have given the mandates to contractors and we are supervising the work. In some other cases, we will carry out the work ourselves,” he adds.

The three rock dykes are located in the Pabos Mills sector of Chandler, near the Bourg de Pabos archaeological site, on the Pabos bank, at the municipal limits of Chandler and Grande-Rivière, and between Percé and Gaspé.

“They will all be built this fall. We have the technical capacity to protect the railway line all the way to Gaspé. We

know how to do it and we are going to do it,” says Éric Dubé. The amount of \$35 million was taken from the overall envelope announced over the years by Transports Québec for the rehabilitation of the Matapédia to Gaspé railroad. Up to \$872 million has been or will be needed to carry out that task, based on a June 27 announcement made in Gaspé by Quebec’s Transport and Sustainable Mobility Minister Geneviève Guilbault. According to the ministry’s latest update, \$224 million has already been invested in the railway’s refurbishment operation.

“We are fortunate to have a

partner of choice to support us in this major sustainable development project for the region,” affirmed Quebec’s deputy premier, Geneviève Guilbault, upon releasing the information pertaining to the \$35 million agreement with the SCFG.

The Gaspé Peninsula railway extends over 202.4 miles, or 325 kilometres, between Matapédia and Gaspé. It was previously owned by the SCFG but in 2015, amidst financial problems experienced by that company under municipal control, the Ministry of Transport and Sustainable Mobility acquired the line.

The project was divided into three sections to facilitate

its completion, Matapédia to Caplan, officially in operation, Caplan to Port Daniel-Gascons, under rehabilitation and slated for operations by the end of 2024 and the Port Daniel-Gascons to Gaspé stretch, under rehabilitation and slated for reopening in 2026. For a certain period of time, the New Richmond to Caplan stretch of railroad is not functional because of an important construction site in Black Cape, as a culvert must be replaced.

The SCFG hauled 3,190 carloads in 2022, down from 4,636 in 2021, a 31.3% decrease stemming from the end of the windmill blade traffic and also from the fact that cement traffic from the Port Daniel plant will stagnate as long as delays occur regarding the line reopening between New Richmond and Saint Mary’s Cement facility.

In 2021 the SCFG transported more than \$160 million worth of exported goods on its trains.

The Government of Canada is also contributing financially to the work between Port Daniel-Gascons and Gaspé, an amount of \$45.8 million will be invested via the Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund and \$10 million under the Rail Safety Improvement Program.