

## VIA Rail's media relations' department sticks to old press line

*Gilles Gagné*

CARLETON – In a recent round of questions sent by SPEC to VIA Rail regarding the delays that have plagued the Ocean train, which links Halifax to Montreal three times weekly and which is also the only passenger train that stops in the Gaspé Peninsula, in Matapedia, the transporter's media relations service addressed regional train services but largely sidestepped issues related to the Ocean.

“We have always maintained that we will resume our service to Gaspé when the rails are safe and allow competitive travel times, and this is still our intention. Aside from the condition of the track, there are also several other factors to consider for VIA Rail, including the availability of rolling stock and labour, as well as the region's station upgrades. We will carry out internal analyses and work together with the owner of the infrastructure to prepare for the return of passenger rail between Matapedia and Gaspé. We do not intend to resume partial service to New Carlisle. We will communicate further when we have more information,” stated the unsigned reply received on the evening of November 9.

SPEC had not inquired about the Gaspé Peninsula train in its last communications with VIA Rail, neither on October 18 nor on November 9.

Cynthia Patterson doesn't put much emphasis on that kind of reply from VIA Rail. “I don't give (VIA Rail's) media relations any weight in the current context,” she declares.