

## Concerns remain about how to protect the railway tracks in Pabos

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**CHANDLER** - Following the storm on January 10, new concerns have emerged about safeguarding the railway tracks in the Banc de Pabos sector. During the storm surge, strong tides threw debris onto the tracks.

The mayor of Chandler, Gilles Daraïche, notes that his municipal team observed water going over the protective wall, and the ditches along Highway 132 were flooded.

The elected official questions the work carried out this fall to protect the railway line, which is slated for rehabilitation in this sector by 2026.

"There was work with riprap. There were tests which, for them, were conclusive. We saw with the force of the storm that it was clearly insufficient to contain the water and the trees coming from the sea," comments the mayor.

"It can't continue because we're going to have storms

like this every year. There will have to be major investments made in this sector because it will continue," adds Mr. Daraïche.

The president of the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie mentioned that the site in question has not undergone maintenance in the last 10 years.

"People need to realize that every time there is a storm, we carry out inspections along its entire length. What we see in Pabos is that Highway 132 passes nearby. But where the railway is in the forest, large trees sometimes fall. Every storm, we do inspections," mentions Éric Dubé.

The president mentions that there is no urgency to act because the train is not yet operational in this sector.

"The foundation of the structure was not destroyed. If there are pieces of wood, we will remove them. If there are rocks, we will replace them or put new ones," continues Mr. Dubé.

The Ministry of Transport aims to protect the entire sector, including Highway 132.

"The ministry is working on a major project which will be carried out over the coming years to secure (that Banc de Pabos sector). We understand that the storms are becoming more and more violent, and major interventions will have to be made. We can lose the railway line for a few days, but we cannot lose our main road," he says.

"We now have the budgets to make corrections and repairs after each storm, allowing the train to run when the rail is rehabilitated to Gaspé. This will protect Highway 132 while awaiting major investments and while taking into account the environmental reality," explains the president.

"It's always impressive, but we're used to bits of woods or the sea. In the Carleton area, every time there is a storm, we go to collect wood from the tracks. It's normal," cites Mr. Dubé as an example.