

Port-Daniel-Gascons and Gaspé: Launch of the final major call for tenders for rail refurbishment

● **NELSON SERGERIE**

GASPÉ - As previously announced by Premier François Legault last November, the Ministry of Transport published on March 21 the last of four major calls for tenders for the refurbishment of the rail between Port-Daniel-Gascons and Gaspé.

In total, five bridges will be repaired, one bridge will be rebuilt, and a retaining wall will be built.

Two of the bridges to be repaired are located in Gascons, a third between Gascons and Newport, a fourth in Newport and the fifth is in Douglastown.

Furthermore, the bridge between Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé and Grande-Rivière must be replaced.

The project also includes the construction of a retaining wall in Pabos Mills, as well as culverts located along the line.

Contractors have until April 22 to submit their bids, and work should begin this summer.

On November 17, during his visit to the Gaspé Peninsula, François Legault announced the first in a series of four calls for tenders for section three. That same day, a

first call was launched for the refurbishment of the bridges over the Grande-Rivière and Anse-à-Brillant; those of the Émile-Couture stream in Grande-Rivière and the beach in Gaspé will be reconstructed. The Séma group in Sainte-Flavie offered to carry out this work for \$74.9 million.

On December 7, a second call for tenders was published for nine infrastructures, including bridges, notably the one over the Grand Pabos River which led to the suspension of rail traffic between New Carlisle and Gaspé in December 2011, and several retaining walls in Anse-à-Beaufils and Sandy Beach. For this contract, only Pomerleau submitted an offer of \$104 million.

A third call for tenders was released on December 11 concerning six bridges to be repaired in Pabos Mills, Pabos and Anse-à-Beaufils. The closing date for calls for proposals was the afternoon of March 27. A company from Saint-Augustin-de-Desmaures, Stellaire Construction, submitted the lowest bid, at \$37 million.

The contracts for the three calls for tenders remain to be awarded, according to the Quebec electronic calls for

tenders site.

In total, 21 different infrastructures need to be repaired or rebuilt in section three, and the railway is expected to be relocated in two areas along this section.

Last June, Quebec indicated that an additional \$637 million was needed to complete the rehabilitation of the rail between Matapédia and Gaspé for a total investment of \$872 million. At last count, \$310 million had been invested.

Section three between Port-Daniel-Gascons and Gaspé needs half a billion dol-

lars, or more precisely, \$517.6 million by 2026 and should be ready in fall 2026 for commissioning in December 2026.

Remember that for section two, between Caplan and Port-Daniel-Gascons, \$300 million will ultimately be required to reach the end of this line portion in December 2024.

In the Quebec Infrastructure Plan published in March, it was indicated that the Quebec government planned to inject \$233 million into section three between Port-Daniel-Gascons and Gaspé this year

and \$259 million next year.

More than \$83 million is also planned for the Caplan to Port-Daniel-Gascons section, including \$73 million this year.

Finally, the first section between Matapédia and Caplan required \$54.5 million.

Initially, the Liberal government of Philippe Couillard released the first \$100 million on May 5, 2017, for its refurbishment, promising to reach Gaspé in 2022. In August 2019, Premier François Legault targeted 2025 and the envelope increased to \$235 million in 2020.



The bridge between Grande-Rivière and Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé will be rebuilt.

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