

Railway repairs remain on track according to premier

NELSON SERGERIE

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ – Premier François Legault is keeping railway repairs on track and intends to see the project through to completion in Gaspé.

When asked about this issue, which continues to generate a lot of talk, during his visit to Gaspé on August 27, Mr. Legault said that phase 2 between Caplan and Port-Daniel-Gascons is going well.

"The money is there, everything is planned. For phase 3, there is a significant cost overrun estimate. We are reviewing the project, but we are still committed to moving forward with it," said the premier.

He reiterated that the Prime Minister of Canada has clearly expressed his willingness to invest in the transportation of minerals that are essential to the development of the defence sector. "This is a great opportunity. Mark Carney is waiting for projects. We have a lot of projects," he said.

In June 2023, Quebec Transportation Minister Geneviève Guilbault announced in Gaspé that section three between Port-Daniel-Gascons and Gaspé would require \$517 million and that the project would be completed in December 2026.

When the budget was tabled last March, the government caused a widespread commotion by returning the project to the planning phase after "enormous" cost overruns in the 2024 tenders.

When asked whether the government was setting an investment ceiling for the work and a time frame, the premier remained vague. "There is a significant cost overrun compared to the estimates at the time Ms. Guilbault announced it. It is certainly not money that has expired and is no longer available. We will examine and analyze how much it will cost to build section 3. It is our intention to do so," he replied, without giving any date for the completion of the work to Gaspé.



Premier François Legault.

Photo: N. Sergerie

At least there's that. As for the rest, since the budget announcement, I have understood that we as a region will have to continue to fight to get the train running to Gaspé," said Éric Dubé, president of the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie.

Transports Québec also commissioned major repair works in the Black Cape area of New Richmond between the fall of 2023 and the spring of 2025. No trains have circulated between Black Cape and Caplan as a result.