

VIA Rail is waiting for the track to be repaired to Gaspé before returning to the Gaspé Peninsula

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LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - VIA Rail will not return to the Gaspé Peninsula until the rail line to Gaspé has been refurbished.

The rail carrier reiterated its position on the sidelines of its annual general meeting, held online on August 21.

"We have always been committed to returning when the infrastructure is in good condition and with an acceptable travel time, and one of our strategic pillars is safety," said VIA President and CEO Mario Pélouquin.

The company mentioned that this issue was raised several times during the period when VIA was receiving comments from the public by email in preparation for the annual general meeting.

There is no question of a partial return to New Carlisle or Port-Daniel-Gascons, as repeatedly requested by the



Photo: Taylor Main

Via Rail will not return to the region until the entire track has been refurbished.

Coalition for the Return of VIA Rail Passenger Trains. "Unfortunately, this is impossible due to train logistics, reversing, and other factors that we do not want to do and cannot do," added the president.

In addition to the Coalition, Alexis Deschênes, the Member of Parliament for the Gaspésie-Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine-Listuguj riding, mentioned after meeting earlier this summer with Denis

Boucher, VIA Rail's Director of Government and Indigenous Relations, that his position was to bring VIA Rail back to the Gaspé Peninsula as quickly as possible and that he wanted to help make

that happen as soon as possible.

During Mr. Boucher's visit, the coalition expressed its intention to continue its efforts and ask VIA Rail and the Quebec government to gradually resume train service as soon as the tracks to Port-Daniel-Gascons are ready.

In May, the National Assembly passed a motion asking VIA Rail to restore its rail service in the Gaspé Peninsula this summer.

In her summer review, Bonaventure MNA Catherine Blouin indicated that work was continuing on the approaches to the tunnel in Port-Daniel-Gascons and that the deadline was November, provided that the Quebec government engineers' strike did not delay the schedule once again.

Technically, the train could have been running to the Port-Daniel station since mid-summer.