

Copper mine strengthens case for rail funding

Nelson Sergerie

GRANDE-RIVIÈRE – The prospect of transporting important copper ore tonnage, if Osisko Metals proceeds with reopening Mines Gaspé in Murdochville, is strengthening the case for completing the rehabilitation of the railway to Gaspé.

The Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie, or Gaspé Railway Corporation recently completed the transportation of about 1 million tonnes of cement between Port-Daniel-Gascons and New Richmond, an operation that started in 2017 and a volume that required an estimated 25,000 truckloads.

Transporting millions of tonnes of copper ore by truck between Murdochville and the Rouyn-Noranda smelter, for example, would not be viable economically.

For Gaspé Member of the National Assembly (MNA) Stéphane Sainte-Croix, the project provides another strong argument for securing the funding needed to complete the rehabilitation of Section 3 of the railway between Port Daniel-Gascons and Gaspé.

“This is what I call a good problem to have. We need strong economic projects that are firmly rooted in our region. It’s becoming increasingly clear that we need an intermodal transportation network that includes road, rail and marine transportation. All of those options are available here,” says Mr. Sainte-Croix.

In June 2023, the Quebec government announced \$871 million to restore the railway to Gaspé. However, the final cost is expected to exceed that estimate.

“I’m not saying we should be talking about a billion dollars, but four years ago we were talking about \$871 million. Considering inflation and what I’m seeing in the construction industry, I don’t think the work can be completed for that amount. All the better if it can,” says the MNA.

“If we can stay within the \$871 million estimate, that would be excellent. But if the cost ends up somewhere between \$900 million and \$1 billion, I don’t think that would be unrealistic,” says the MNA.



Gaspé MNA Stéphane Sainte-Croix.

Photo: Nelson Sergerie