
From: "Julian Isitt" <julian_isitt@telus.net>
To: "john duncan" <john.duncan@parl.gc.ca>
Sent: Friday, November 22, 2013 5:56 PM
Subject: RE: Vancouver Island Rail Service

Thank you, Mr. Duncan for your reply.

Unfortunately, the island's rail system may need a bit more federal support than that. Given the billions of dollars of federal monies that continue to be pumped into transportation infrastructure on B.C.'s mainland (and even greater sums for the Québec City-Windsor corridor), I do very much hope that you are successful in convincing your colleagues to keep alive the strategic rail option for the 700,000 or so residents of Vancouver Island. The added investment represents perhaps one-half the cost of a single federally-funded interchange on the Trans-Canada Highway or 2% or so of the estimated cost of one F-35 fighter jet.

Island folks are loyal and, I believe, therefore unlikely to overlook your efforts in this respect. In an earlier note, you may recall I advocated an expanded role for Langford's mayor, Stew Young, in the governance of the rail network here. That is something I would still encourage. The mayor has an understanding of the issues and the confidence of your

government. More s[pecifically, he realizes that retaining the E&N right-of-way as a working rail corridor is a far more economical and achievable way to meet the island's burgeoning transportation needs than the billion-dollar light-rail transit pipedream of Victoria's tax-and-spend mayor, Dean Fortin. Undoubtedly, should that ill-considered alternative ever see the light of day, downstream pressures on the Government of Canada to contribute many hundreds of millions of dollars rather than tens would be immense.

It is tough being a conservatively-minded island resident these days but I remain hopeful that the Harper Government will take some initiative to help get the trains moving again.

Vancouver Island residents, from Courtenay in the north island to Victoria in the south, are willing to do what they can.

Regards,
Julian Isitt
308-406 Simcoe Street
Victoria, BC

From: john.duncan@parl.gc.ca [<mailto:john.duncan@parl.gc.ca>]
Sent: November 21, 2013 10:58 AM
To: julian_isitt@telus.net

OTTAWA

Thank you for your correspondence regarding the future of passenger rail service on Vancouver Island.

In recent discussions between Via Rail and the Province of BC it was noted that Via Rail would be happy to reinstate the former track subsidy agreement of \$1.4 million but that the proposal of \$1.8 million is a non-starter.

As indicated in recent media reports a revised proposal put forth to Via Rail that works within the subsidy restraints is welcomed.

Sincerely,
John Duncan, P.C., M.P.
Vancouver Island North

From: Julian Isitt [mailto:julian_isitt@telus.net]

Sent: October 19, 2013 9:55 PM

To: Duncan, John - M.P.

Subject: Vancouver Island Rail Service

Dear Mr. Duncan,

I am writing further to an article published by the Times Colonist about Vancouver Island rail service and what I suspect may have been an oversimplification of your position on the subject. I agree with you that more business input is needed and that Stew Young has been a shining light.

I am worried that frustration with the ICF could serve as grounds for writing off what could, and should in time, become a significant high-speed, north-south Vancouver Island transportation service. Once the rails are gone, the adjacent properties will be developed in incompatible ways rendering the corridor useless for future rail. Moreover, given presently deteriorating fiscal prospects, it is hard to conceive that the Island would ever gain have the chance to create a modern passenger rail service serving Islanders from Courtenay to Victoria.

As a senior citizen, I know my driving days are numbered. For people like me (and, of course, generations to come), good public transport is essential. Noisy, polluting, rough-riding and road congesting diesel buses cannot compare with the comfort, speed and attractiveness of modern passenger rail as found in most industrialized countries throughout the world, nations that are continuing to invest heavily in improving these services. Canada is among these countries. In today's edition of The Globe and Mail, there is an article on a sweeping and costly restoration of Toronto's Union Station complex. Your government and others, for good reasons, have continued to invest hundreds of millions of dollars in passenger rail services from Windsor to Quebec City.

I understand why the Harper Government may be displeased by what it might view as ICF's squeeze play. Nonetheless, there is a public interest issue at stake that I believe warrants serious and non-partisan attention. Backyard politics should not be allowed to

jeopardize the economic policies that your government has been promoting.

I am also concerned about the apparent agenda of the mayor of Victoria and his supporters on council to build an unaffordable light rail alternative to the E&N. Undoubtedly, were this allowed to proceed, hands would be out instantly for large amounts of federal funding. In my view, the LRT supporters have willfully sought elimination of the E&N commuter rail alternative in order to build support for their own pet scheme. A modernized commuter rail service could be built on the E&N right-of-way for 5% of the cost of the mayor's unaffordable \$1 billion LRT plan. The mayor's not so subtle poker hand, of working behind the scenes to undermine continued VIA Rail passenger service while advocating what many view as a pipe dream, puts the Island at extreme risk of ending up with no passenger rail service at all. For your information,

I enclose a letter I recently wrote to Marc Laliberté, the president of VIA Rail Canada Inc. You may be interested in the points I presented to him. In any event, you are in an excellent position to help bring some common sense to the table. I urge you use your influence to help achieve this end while doing what you reasonably can to keep open for future generations of Islanders the passenger rail option.

Yours truly,



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