



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

ALAN TONKS, M.P. / DÉPUTÉ
YORK SOUTH-WESTON

January 24, 2011

Metrolinx Board
J. Robert S. Pritchard
Chair
20 Bay Street, Suite 600
Toronto, ON
M5J 2W3

Re: Meeting of January 26: Consideration of Staff Report on Electrification

Dear Members of the Board:

First, I would like to thank the Board for the manner in which matters related to both the Go Expansion in the Georgetown Corridor and the proposed Pearson-Union Air Rail Link have included citizen information and consultation during the process of decision-making.

As members will be aware, serious issues relating to air and noise pollution emanated from the Environmental Assessment. Particularly as these issues affect public health, residents throughout the corridor have expressed extreme concern.

As the Georgetown and Weston Corridor continues to urbanize and gain importance to commuter travel in the Greater Toronto Area, it is entirely appropriate that, as the staff report recommends, this corridor be given high priority with respect to electrification both for Go expansion and the Air Rail Link.

While I support the staff recommendations and hope the Board will also, I would hope that all efforts would be made to electrify as soon as possible. It is my understanding that Tier 4 Diesel Locomotive Technology is still in the developmental stage. While superior to present diesel technology, residents would obviously breathe a sigh of relief if electrification could remain the primary focus for implementation, particularly the Air Rail Link as soon as possible.

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Again in closing, thank you to the Board and staff, particularly for locating the Metrolinx Public Consultation Centre centrally. The complicated process of building an integrated transit-oriented transportation system for the G.T.A. is of paramount importance to competitiveness and quality of life. Citizen support, however, for this effort is of great importance and I appreciate that the Board and staff are respectful of this relationship with our public and its elected officials.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alan Tonks". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alan Tonks, M.P.
York South-Weston

P.S. In support of electrification as part of a National Commuter Transportation Strategy, private members' motions have been presented to both the Ontario Legislature by M.P.P. Laura Albanese and the House of Commons by myself. My own Private Members' Bill is presently going through that process calling for Federal/Provincial co-ordination in support of electrification of urban commuter rail as part of that National Transportation Strategy.

Cc: Mayor Rob Ford
Councillor Frances Nunziata
Laura Albanese, M.P.P.



Laura Albanese, MPP
York South-Weston

Metrolinx Board
20 Bay Street, suite 600
Toronto, ON M5J 2W3

January 24, 2011

Dear Members of the Board,

I am encouraged that the staff report found many advantages to electrification and, based on the findings of the study, indicated that Metrolinx should now develop and embrace an electrification transportation strategy.

I strongly support the staff recommendation that, due to the more urban and densely populated neighbourhoods along the Georgetown corridor, Metrolinx declare it be made a priority line for electrification.

While the proposed Tier Four diesel trains will be an improvement, and also noting that the staff report indicated that these trains can be converted to electric, I would ask that Metrolinx consider staging electrification with priority given to the stretch of the corridor from Weston to Union station for conversion, given the proximity of the tracks to neighbourhoods along this part of the corridor, and the concerns about pollution and noise deriving from the increased train traffic.

I cannot emphasize enough, the concerns of many residents living along the rail corridor from Weston to Union, and that Metrolinx embark on an aggressive plan to complete electrification now that we have completed a significant study into this matter.

I continue to believe that Metrolinx should be working towards a goal that see the electrification infrastructure in priority areas and along priority sections of the rail track completed by 2015.

I appreciate the extra care Metrolinx has taken to work with the community through the electrification study and through infrastructure changes along the corridor that will be needed for the ARL and for the expansion of GO train service.

I urge you to continue to keep the needs and concerns of the residents along the Georgetown line upper most in your mind as Metrolinx moves forward with commuter rail expansion and the eventual shift to electrification.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laura Albanese".

Laura Albanese, M.P.P.
York South-Weston

cc. Hon. Kathleen Wynne, Minister of Transportation
Frances Nunziata, Councillor Ward 11
Alan Tonks, MP York South-Weston

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January 25, 2011

J. Robert S. Prichard
Chair, Metrolinx Board of Directors
20 Bay Street, Suite 600
Toronto, ON M5J 2W3
Robert.Prichard@metrolinx.com

Dear Mr. Prichard:

Re: Electrification of the GO rail system

I am writing to acknowledge completion of the important work resulting in the GO Electrification Study, and to support the recommendation found in the Metrolinx Board Report, GO Electrification Study:

“That the Board adopt the recommendations ... to proceed with Option 3, the electrification of the combined Georgetown and Lakeshore rail corridors...”

I understand that the Metrolinx Board of Directors will consider this matter at your meeting on Wednesday, January 26, 2011. I encourage you to adopt this recommendation and to proceed as soon as possible with Phase One and subsequent phases of the electrification of the Georgetown and Lakeshore rail corridors.

Electrification of the Georgetown and Lakeshore rail corridors, while proposed for primarily business reasons, will bring health benefits to the communities adjacent to these corridors. By undertaking this initiative, Metrolinx will also be making its own modest but real contribution to the overall collective effort to improve air quality for the broader population of Toronto.

Following through on the recommendation for electrification, Metrolinx can choose a course for commuter rail in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area that would contribute to:

- incremental reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and selected criteria air contaminants (i.e., nitrogen oxides and sulphur oxides);
- reduced on-road traffic congestion associated with an increase in the transit mode share;
- healthier lifestyles and improved health outcomes in new commuters who use active transportation (e.g., walking or bicycling) to travel to and from GO rail stations; and,

- elimination of local emissions of diesel exhaust, which contains several toxic chemicals that are found in ambient air at levels of health concern (e.g., acetaldehyde, acrolein, benzene, 1,3-butadiene)

To advance the benefits of electrification for both riders and adjacent communities, I encourage Metrolinx to work collaboratively with the appropriate Provincial ministries to explore a more expedited approach to electrification than proposed. Given the added service and health benefits that could occur with full electrification of the GO rail network, I also encourage Metrolinx to pursue the required approvals and funding to implement electrification of the GO rail system starting with the Georgetown and Lakeshore corridors as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. McKeown". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "D." and last name "McKeown" clearly distinguishable.

Dr. David McKeown
Medical Officer of Health

copies: Bruce McCuaig, President and CEO, Metrolinx (Bruce.McCuaig@metrolinx.com)
John Wilkinson, Minister of the Environment (jwilkinson.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org)
Kathleen Wynne, Minister of Transportation (kwynne.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org)

January 25, 2011

Robert Prichard, Chairman
and Members,
Metrolinx Board of Directors
Suite 600, 20 Bay Street
Toronto, Ontario M5J 2W3

The Clean Train Coalition (CTC), representing 300,000 residents along GO's Georgetown Corridor, welcomes this opportunity to share our thoughts and concerns regarding the GO Electrification Study, which staff released on January 19. While the CTC agrees with the general thrust of the study, we also believe it has serious flaws that will undermine what we interpret as the agency's lukewarm endorsement of electrification:

- Trip time savings are a recognized advantage of electric trains, but the critical importance of this feature is seriously understated in this study. Electrifying GO will make it possible to provide much more frequent service that will carry more riders. Because of their rapid acceleration and braking abilities, electric trains can also serve more stops while providing the same or better trip times.
- Health impacts of diesel trains are extremely minimized or ignored in the study. Metrolinx does not deal with micro-fine particulates at all. Risk of respiratory illness for vulnerable populations living along the corridor is unstated. Data is being aggregated and averaged broadly across the GTA, rather than focused on the effect on the local corridor communities. Toronto's Medical Officer of Health, Dr David McKeown, and Toronto Sick Children's Hospital researcher Dr. Ian Clarke state electric trains are the preferred mode of public transit to avoid respiratory health impacts to vulnerable populations in the diesel exhaust spew zone.
- Environmental impacts are also highly understated. A 94% reduction in greenhouse gases (GHG) from the rail operation is fluffed off as only a small percentage of Canada-wide emissions. Metrolinx ignores the fact that ARL operation with diesel will actually **increase** GHGs and nitrous oxide emissions over the use of private automobiles. This is caused by the very small numbers of passengers per ARL trip, the result of it being an elite business class service rather than a useful mass transportation service.
- The critical issue of noise levels of diesel trains has been masked by averaging the noise over the entire length of a 12-car train rather than directly comparing the noise of the diesel or the electric locomotives powering these trains. Expanded diesel operation will require 10,000 metres of massive walls as sound barriers on the Georgetown Line alone. Quieter electric operation would require significantly less, perhaps none.
- Operating cost benefits of electric trains have been minimized by using a 72 cents/litre diesel fuel price as a comparative. This historic price is highly improbable given the global energy future. Even at this price, the report still indicates a 25 % savings by using electric vehicles.
- The economic benefits of electrification have not received sufficient attention. Using industry-accepted multipliers, the \$1.8 billion for electrification of the ARL/Georgetown/Lakeshore bundle will create \$5.4-\$7.2 billion in economic activity and 36,000-64,800 jobs. Previous GO studies have said a large percentage of this activity will occur within Ontario.

- Metrolinx dismisses the timeframes laid out in past GO studies or achieved on other projects around the world. Based on these timeframes, we fail to understand how Metrolinx can state it will take 20-24 years to electrify, especially given that the Georgetown Line will be 'electrification ready' with the completion of the current GO expansion projects.
- Metrolinx admits it can't reach the frequent-service targets in its 25-year Regional Transportation Plan without electrification, but fails to explain how it will meet those targets if much of the electrification occurs after the target dates.

In short, the Metrolinx study attempts to position diesels as an acceptable alternative, while outwardly appearing to endorse electrification.

The CTC is greatly concerned that this skews the value of an allegedly comprehensive \$4 million study and provides the Government of Ontario with yet another opportunity to turn down rail electrification. To do so would be incredibly short-sighted. Rejecting electrification and expanding diesel operation would fly in the face of the continuous expansion of electric commuter rail service that has occurred in major cities around the world for more than a century.

It should be noted that the Metrolinx Electrification Study is the latest of 12 studies done over the past 30 years, all highlighting the economic, operational and environmental benefits of electrifying GO's rail services.

The CTC recommends the electrification plan now be peer reviewed by independent, international electric rail professionals rather than consultants under the direction of GO or Metrolinx. No one has examined how to implement the ARL as an independent electrification project integrated with the current Georgetown South improvements in order to minimize costs and time delays. The time for the Minister of Transport to do this is now, before the proposed placement of the order for the Japanese diesel rail cars for the ARL on February 6.

If this expert peer review confirms the lengthy timelines Metrolinx staff have put forward as being necessary to electrify, then alternative modes of transit should be provided for the Pan Am Games while the electric ARL is built properly and cost-effectively. Surely, added GO train and bus services can be used to meet the temporary demands of a two-week sports event.

The CTC strongly believes the ARL should be electric from the outset, that electrification of the Georgetown and Lakeshore lines should be accelerated and that the communities through which these rail lines pass should be better served with healthy and cost-effective electric transit.

We encourage you, the Board of Directors of Metrolinx, to endorse staff's recommendation of electrification and to now work to make it happen faster based on real-world experience and advice. It is our hope that we can work with you to ensure this happens. We are available to meet with you at your convenience to do so.

Yours sincerely,

Signed original to be hand delivered

Carina Cojeen and Mike Sullivan
Co-Chairs, Clean Train Coalition

cc. Metrolinx President and CEO Bruce McCuaig
GO President Gary McNeil
Ontario Minister of Transportation Kathleen Wynne
Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty
Federal Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities Chuck Strahl
Toronto Mayor Rob Ford
Metrolinx VP Strategic Communications John Brodhead