

Ministry of Infrastructure

Ministry of  
Transportation

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Ministère de l'Infrastructure

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Transports

Bureau du ministre

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OCT 09 2012

M2012-5527

Mr. Kevin Putnam  
Junction Triangle Rail Committee  
299 Perth Avenue  
Toronto ON M6P 3X9

Dear Mr. Putnam:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Air Rail Link (ARL), which was forwarded to me by the Honourable Dalton McGuinty, Premier of Ontario. I welcome the opportunity to respond.

Bruce McCuaig, President and CEO of Metrolinx, and I would be pleased to meet with you. My scheduler, Shannan McShane, will be in contact to arrange the details.

An Environmental Assessment (EA) to electrify the ARL is indeed underway. This is a critical step in electrification of this important rail service.

The Province of Ontario is committed to delivering the ARL project, connecting Canada's busiest passenger hubs – Pearson International Airport and Toronto Union Station – for the first time with a reliable and convenient service. This project will create jobs, ease traffic congestion, and boost local quality of life. Construction is underway and we are on track to have the service running in 2015 – in time for the Pan/Parapan American Games.

We are committed to delivering the ARL service in an environmentally-responsible manner. The ARL will launch with state-of-the-art Tier 4 diesel vehicles. Tier 4 emission standards are the strictest non-road engine emission standards possible, as established by the US Environmental Protection Agency. These vehicles will produce 75 per cent fewer nitrogen oxide emissions than current GO trains which run along this corridor.

The ARL will play a critical role in improving the health of our region. When the ARL launches in 2015 using Tier 4 engines, there will be lower emissions from Ontario's train services on the corridor than today. In addition, the ARL will take 1.2 million car trips off the road in its first year alone, reducing congestion and harmful emissions in our communities.

As you know, Metrolinx is moving forward with an EA for an electrified ARL. Preliminary design and engineering is already underway. The EA is a critical step toward electrification and the study is expected to be completed in 2014.

The vehicles that have been purchased for the ARL are fully convertible to electric, and infrastructure improvements currently underway on the Georgetown South Corridor are being built to allow for electrification.

I am proud that our government is moving forward with an ARL service that will lower emissions, take millions of car trips off our roads and create thousands of jobs.

In response to a letter from MPP Laura Albanese, Metrolinx CEO Bruce McCuaig outlined a timeline for electrification of the ARL. Mr. McCuaig noted – as Metrolinx has consistently stated – that work to electrify the ARL service cannot begin until both the Georgetown South Project (GTS) infrastructure and the EA on electrification are completed by the end of 2014.

As a strong advocate for her community, MPP Albanese continues to have a real impact on ARL and GO service on the Georgetown South Corridor. She secured funding for a comprehensive EA for electrification; successfully advocated to secure a new GO station at Weston, currently under construction; and successfully advocated to make the new Weston GO station an Air Rail Link stop for use by local residents. I commend MPP Albanese for her strong community leadership.

The Ontario government believes we must continue to invest in public transit. On a typical weekday morning, some 45,000 passengers arrive at Toronto's Union Station by GO Train in a single hour. We would need to build four more Gardiner Expressways and four new Don Valley Parkways to accommodate that amount of traffic into Toronto on a daily basis. That's why projects like the ARL are crucial to develop our economy and protect our environment.

In addition, thanks to the strong advocacy of our Toronto caucus, we are working with the City of Toronto to invest \$8.4 billion to expand the public transit network across the city. By getting more people out of their cars and onto transit, we are improving the air quality for everyone in the region.

We are also working to improve air quality by closing coal plants across Ontario. Lakeview Generating Station in Mississauga stopped burning coal in April 2005. By the end of 2014, all 19 coal units will have stopped burning coal, making the air easier to breathe for everyone in the community.

Earlier this year, we celebrated the seventh anniversary of Ontario's Greenbelt – 1.8 million acres of permanently-protected green space, farmland, forests, wetlands and watersheds. In addition, our government is working with Trees Ontario to plant 50 million trees across southern Ontario.



Taken together, it is clear that there has been no more environmentally conscious and public transit-focused government in our province's history and our investments in transit are unprecedented.

Thank you again for writing and I look forward to meeting with you.

Sincerely,



Bob Chiarelli  
Minister

c: Laura Albanese, MPP, York South-Weston  
Lisa DiLollo, MPP Liaison and Stakeholder Manager, Minister's Office  
Bruce McCuaig, President and CEO, Metrolinx  
The Honourable Dalton McGuinty, Premier of Ontario  
Shannan McShane, Office Manager and Scheduler, Minister's Office