

Minister of Transport



Ministre des Transports

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0N5

- 3 MAY 2005

Mr. Alan Tonks, M.P.
House of Commons
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6

Dear Colleague:

I am writing in response to your correspondence of March 10, 2005, regarding the development of the air-rail link between Lester B. Pearson International Airport and Toronto's Union Station.

I understand that officials from Transport Canada and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency briefed you on this file on April 4, 2005. In addition, I have been informed that Transport Canada officials are in contact with GO Transit on a number of the points that you raised during the briefing, particularly making a clearer distinction between the provincial and federal environmental assessment processes in future GO Transit documents that may become publicly available. I appreciate your valuable feedback on these matters.

For your reference, I have enclosed a news release dated November 13, 2003, which includes further information about the air-rail link. As noted in this document, the Government of Canada is contributing \$385 million toward the expansion of the entire GO Transit network. As you are aware, this amount is being matched by provincial and municipal governments, bringing the total to nearly \$1.2 billion. However, it is important to highlight that projects along the Georgetown/Weston rail corridor represent a comparatively small portion of the overall GO Transit initiative. Moreover, improvements along this line will be of benefit to many travellers, including users of GO Transit, VIA Rail, Canadian National (CN), Canadian Pacific Railway and the future air-rail link.

As departmental officials indicated to you during the briefing, Transport Canada is not providing financial support directly to the air-rail link proponent, Union Pearson AirLink Group, for the development of the spur line into the airport, the acquisition of train equipment, annual operating subsidies, or start-up costs. This project is well suited for a public-private partnership, where the private sector will finance, design, construct, operate and maintain the air-rail link service, while the public sector contributes to infrastructure upgrades, such as improvements to shared assets in GO Transit's Georgetown Corridor/CN Weston subdivision and upgrades in and around Union Station.

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Please be assured that I share your enthusiasm for a new passenger rail service in Toronto that will be direct, rapid, and seamless. Through the environmental assessment process, I hope that solutions will be identified that satisfy, to the greatest extent possible, the interests of all stakeholders, including residents of Weston.

I trust that the foregoing will be of assistance in addressing your concerns on this matter. Thank you for writing.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Lapierre', written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned above the printed name.

Hon. Jean-C. Lapierre, P.C., M.P.

Enclosures

c.c. The Honourable Stéphane Dion, P.C., M.P.