

May 4, 2005

The Honourable Leona Dombrowsky, M.P.P.
Minister of the Environment, Government of Ontario

The Honourable Jean Lapierre, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Transport, Government of Canada

The Honourable Stephane Dion, P.C., M.P.
Minister of the Environment, Government of Canada

The Honourable Harinder Takhar, M.P.P.
Minister of Transportation, Government of Ontario

Re. GO Transit Georgetown/Weston S/D Corridor Expansion Environmental Assessment (EA)

Dear Ministers:

Over the past few months GO Transit has been acting as lead agency for an E.A., evaluating both an expanded use of the CN/Weston Rail Corridor for GO Transit purposes and the proposed Air Rail Link between Pearson International Airport and Union Station.

Events and circumstances up to this time of writing have resulted in the creation of an extremely high level of public concern; particularly related to the appearance of a conflict of interest specific to the role of S.N.C. Lavalin as consultant of record for the E.A. process and both proponent and operator of the Air Rail Link. The GO Board itself appears to recognize this relationship is problematic and on April 8/05 directed staff to report on the feasibility and cost for 'peer review' of the outcomes of the E.A. process. It cannot be overstated how absolutely transparent and 'up front' the E.A. process must be if the public is to have the confidence in the resulting finding and recommendations.

On the basis of the unparalleled public reaction, we believe that the key to maintaining public confidence rests with comprehensive due diligence, including cost-benefit analysis of all alternatives that were part of the original call for proposal which resulted in S.N.C. Lavalin being the successful bidder. Under the parameters of a Class B Environmental Assessment, which is usually applicable to GO Transit, expansion, design, community impact and cost, are evaluated. On the matter of corridor choice, this matter is academic since the rail corridor already exists and the public has generally not only understood this, but has been supportive of the public use of this corridor for GO Transit purposes.

The public is not satisfied however that a Class B Environmental Assessment is appropriate to both the scale of a combined GO Expansion/Air Rail Link. The public deserves total accessibility to information, and the total accountability of a process that is designed to scrutinize all aspects of a decision in the magnitude of the current proposal. This in particular involves a comparative analysis of alternatives and there is not confidence or assurance that either S.N.C. Lavalin/GO Transit has the capacity to carry out in an unfettered manner this responsibility. **It is therefore our position that the public's request for an Environmental Assessment 'bump up' to a Class C be agreed to in an appropriately co-ordinated manner between the relevant Federal and Provincial Ministries, and that the support for this request be submitted to GO Transit and the Mayor and City Council of the City of Toronto.**

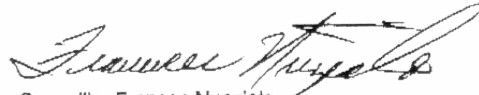
It is also our position that any public money committed by the three levels of government to GO Transit expansion should not be contingent on the S.N.C. Lavalin Air Rail Link moving forward. Progressive investments of public money in public transit should not be determined by the success or failure of a public private partnership infrastructure initiative. Those improvements GO Transit requires to move forward with today, will serve the infrastructure needs of the Greater Toronto Area and Weston in the future. The Government of Canada, the Government of Ontario and the City of Toronto must ensure that this future is not compromised.

Thank-you for taking the time to consider these issues of concern to our community. We look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,



Alan Tonks, M.P.
York South-Weston



Councillor Frances Nunziata
Ward 11, York South-Weston

Copy. The Honourable Joe Cordiano, MPP
His Worship, David Miller, Mayor of the City of Toronto
Councillor Frank Di Giorgio, Ward 12
Residents of the Weston Community