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## Pan Am Games socialize risk, privatize profit

September 05, 2009

**Re:Pan Am VIPs ride GO,****while 1,600 fume, Sept. 1**

Your front-page story on the virtual hijacking of a GO commuter train by Pan Am Games officials and their local collaborators made me sick. How dare they inconvenience GTA commuters to promote their latest circus, which will benefit only the rich and well connected?

Why do we keep pampering and toadying to these international sports elites in search of elusive games, whether Olympic, Pan Am or otherwise? These mega sports events have little long-term benefit for local residents and they end up costing taxpayers untold millions of dollars. (Just look at the budgetary problems facing Vancouver.)

They're classic examples of socializing the risks and privatizing the profits.

*Andrew van Velzen, Toronto*

The Pan Am Games will result in public investment in building new and improving the old infrastructure, creating thousands of jobs and motivating our youths to get actively involved in games-related sports activities. We will continue to use the infrastructure long after the games are over. Our economy also desperately needs such stimulus. Canadians should support this bid without any reservation.

*Jeff Ram Brijwasi, Toronto*

The Pan Am Games organization has declared the 2015 games to be the first "green and sustainable" games. Unfortunately for Toronto's bid, Ontario plans to build the world's busiest diesel rail corridor (464 trains per day) through the centre of Toronto in part to support the bid.

Part of that corridor will be used by 55-year-old diesel trains to "whisk" participants and visitors (at \$20 per ride) to Union Station from the airport, as part of Ontario's "world class" infrastructure makeover. Those trains will pollute the air up to 28 times as much as the cars they take off the road, according to Metrolinx's figures.

In total, the new trains will contribute as much smog-producing chemicals to our air in a year as about one-half the Thunder Bay coal-fired electric plant. We need our breath, not circuses, Mr. McGuinty. Please make sure all these trains are electric. Vancouver did it right. Toronto should too.

*Mike Sullivan, Chair, Weston*

*Community Coalition*

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