

Media Release
May 25, 2011

Island MP's to Work with Province for Rail Funding

The drive to keep Island rail service operational took another step forward with government Island MP's John Duncan and James Lunney agreeing to work in concert with the BC government to secure a \$15 million rail infrastructure investment.

At a meeting Tuesday May 24th at Nanaimo, arranged by the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities, Duncan and Lunney heard from Island mayors for the need to continue rail operations.

AVICC President Joe Stanhope said he was encouraged with the comments and support by both MP's. "It is obvious that Minister Duncan and Dr. Lunney are tremendously supportive of the Island Corridor Foundation infrastructure application that will keep rail service operational", he said.

This was the second meeting the AVICC has arranged with government officials to press for the needed funding. A meeting with the province was held several weeks ago.

ICF co chair, Mary Ashley, said this meeting and the earlier discussion with BC Minister of Transportation, Blair Leckstrom has buoyed her confidence in the future of Island rail. "We have worked hard to present a good case to both governments for capital funding that will ensure rail is a viable transportation alternative", added Ashley.

Ashley said it is critical the governments give a quick answer. "Although freight service is still operational that can't carry on indefinitely without the needed track improvements", she stated.

VIA passenger service was suspended March 18th pending track improvements.

The \$15 million rail infrastructure investment would replace 104,000 ties and undertake other track improvements. The ICF has approached the federal and provincial governments to provide \$7.5million each.

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