

AVICC Press Release
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Minister Promises Island Rail Answer

The decision of whether rail will continue to exist on Vancouver Island is a step closer with the BC Minister of Transportation Blair Lekstrom telling Island mayors he will get an answer to the Island Corridor Foundation \$15 million rail infrastructure request submitted to the federal and provincial governments last October.

“The minister told us this would require a treasury board submission for the \$7.5 million provincial contribution”, said Association of Vancouver Island & Coastal Communities president, Joe Stanhope, “and he would get us a quick reply”.

Island mayors and representatives of the ICF met with Minister Lekstrom and Parksville MLA Ron Cantelon to discuss the VIA Rail passenger service shutdown and the need for the infrastructure funding to secure the future of rail on Vancouver Island.

Mayors from Courtenay – Greg Phelps, Port Alberni- Ken McRae, Duncan – Phil Kent, Langford – Stewart Young and View Royal- Graham Hill, joined Stanhope, who is also the chair of the Regional District of Nanaimo and ICF co chairs Judith Sayers and Mary Ashley in pressing the need for immediate action to get the rail service operational again. MLA’s Ida Chong, Murray Coell and Don McRae were also represented.

Stanhope said the minister had several questions with respect to future rail infrastructure requests and the possibility of a contribution by the Island Coastal Economic Trust.

“We said there would be a formal letter going to ICTE requesting an assisting contribution,” added Stanhope.

The minister was also asked to coordinate a response from Canada when the new federal minister of transportation was appointed.

Stanhope stated he was very pleased with the hour long passionate discussion and the keen interest expressed by the minister.

Southern Rail of Vancouver Island continues to operate rail freight trains on the rail road.

Media contact:
Graham Bruce
250 246 4320
250 210 0411