



July 19, 2023

The Honourable Kim Masland
Nova Scotia Minister of Public Works
P.O Box 186
Halifax Nova Scotia
B3J 2N2

Sent electronically to: publicworksminister@novascotia.ca

Dear Minister Masland

RE: Bill 236 – The Railways Act -Windsor & Hansport Railway Company

Please accept the following letter on behalf of the Council of the Municipality of East Hants with respect to Bill 236 – The Railways Act and its' impact on the Windsor & Hantsport Railway Company.

As the Council for our region, the challenge we face is the status of the Windsor and Hansport Railway Company and its controlling interest in the former short rail line and associated lands. The company is defined as being active by the issuance of an Operating License but in reality, it is inactive.

The inactivity of the former short rail line has been well beyond a decade. It appears that all crossings have been paved over by the Province on Highway 1, East Uniacke Road and South Uniacke Road. There have been no signs of maintenance or vegetation management along the rail corridor. Residents have brought forward safety concerns with the stability of bridges and concerns with railway ties that are near or fallen into water courses, and the potential environmental impacts that they may cause. East Hants Council cannot understand how this Operating License is deemed active given its current state.

The rail corridor that travels through Mount Uniacke is adjacent to multiple municipal, provincial and community-owned recreational assets. These include a library, elementary and middle school, skateboard park and baseball diamonds. A repurpose of this corridor would provide safe travel paths and recreational opportunities for our community and connections to our neighbouring communities supporting Active Transportation routes.

In March 2020, an amendment to Bill 236 Railway Act was passed by the Nova Scotia Legislature, however this bill has yet to be proclaimed. Over three years have passed with no obvious movement on this legislation.

East Hants Council is requesting the assistance of your department and the Province of Nova Scotia in supporting our ongoing efforts to be able to rejuvenate and repurpose this vital recreational corridor in our community.

The Province owns former short rail lines that have been converted to “rails to trails” that benefits HRM and South Shore Communities. East Hants would like the same opportunities provided to our residents that the province has afforded to other Nova Scotians.

East Hants Council made the following motion to formally express our position.

“Council direct staff to write a letter to the Honourable Kim Masland, Minister of The Nova Scotia Department of Public Works, expressing Councils desire for an expeditious proclamation of Bill 236 or intervention by the Province declaring the Windsor and Hansport Railway no longer having controlling interests in the former short rail line”

We welcome a meeting to discuss this matter and look forward to hearing from you.

Respectfully,



Eleanor Roulston, Warden

CC: Municipality of the Region of West Hants
The Honourable Brad Johns, MLA Sackville-Uniacke, Attorney General & Minister of Justice
John A. MacDonald, MLA Hants East
Melissa Sheehy-Richard, MLA Hants West