



July 5, 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](mailto:publicworksminister@novascotia.ca)

Dear Minister Masland

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

Please accept the following letter on behalf of the Council of the West Hants Regional Municipality 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 Hantsport Railway Company and its controlling interest in the 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. Its' deterioration is very evident with a lack of maintenance to the line, ongoing safety concerns within the community, its abandonment and derelict engines and cars sitting dormant in Windsor and Hantsport communities. We struggle to understand how it is possible that the Windsor and Hantsport Railway Company's license has yet to be revoked.

It is our understanding that in March of 2020 an amendment to Bill 236 Railway Act was passed by the Nova Scotia Legislature, however this bill has yet to be proclaimed due to awaiting preparation of Regulations that will accompany the Act.

Although the Province, through the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal (currently the Department of Public Works) stated the Regulations were "under development" no time frame was provided for their completion. As a result of waiting for these Regulations, three (3) years have passed resulting in no change to the status of Bill 236 – The Railways Act. During this three-year period momentum has grown in interest to convert the rail line, whose operations remain dormant, and infrastructure continues to deteriorate into an Active Transportation route.

Recently, the Region of West Hants purchased, in partnership with the Municipality East Hants, the former DAR line from Mantua to Kennecook for the purpose of converting a “rails to trails” network. This will be a coordinated effort connecting the two municipalities.

We are requesting the assistance of your department and the Province of Nova Scotia in supporting our ongoing Active Transportation initiatives by revisiting Bill 236 and the Operating License granted to the Windsor & Hantsport Railway Company.

To formally express the current position of the Council who met on June 27, 2023, to discuss this matter the following motion was ratified.

*“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 Hantsport Railway no longer having controlling interest in the tracks”.*

We thank you for your attention to this matter and we look forward to hearing from you.

Respectfully,



Abraham Zebian, Mayor

ds/az

CC: Municipality of East Hants  
Member of Parliament for Kings-Hants, Kody Blois  
Melissa Sheehy-Richard, MLA Hants West  
WHRM Council  
Chief Administrative Officer, Mark Phillips