November 6th, 2026

The Honourable Steven MacKinnon P.C., M.P.
Minister of Transport
Ottawa, Ontario,
Canada
K1A 0A6

The Honourable Heath MacDonald P.C., M.P.
Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Ottawa, Ontario,
Canada
K1A 0A6

Re: Request for Immediate Pause and Independent Review of the Alto High-Speed Rail Project

Dear Ministers MacKinnon and MacDonald,

On behalf of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA), the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA), and the Union des producteurs agricoles (UPA), we are writing to express our serious concerns regarding the potential impacts of the Alto High-Speed Rail project on Canada's agricultural sector and to request an immediate suspension of all project-related activities that could affect farmland until a comprehensive, independent review has been completed.

This letter follows earlier correspondence from both OFA and UPA outlining concerns about the proposed project and requesting a meeting with you. Given the importance of these issues, we wish to reaffirm those concerns on behalf of the broader Canadian agricultural sector.

Our organizations collectively represent farmers across Ontario and Quebec, including numerous producers whose farms, businesses, and livelihoods would be directly affected by the proposed high-speed rail corridor. While we recognize the importance of improving passenger transportation infrastructure and enhancing mobility between major population centres, these objectives must not come at the expense of Canada's agricultural land base, food production capacity, or the long-term viability of rural communities.

The proposed corridor traverses some of the most productive agricultural land in Canada. Once farmland is lost, fragmented, or rendered less productive by major infrastructure projects, those impacts are permanent. Protecting agricultural land is not simply a local land-use issue; it is a matter of national food security.

The Alto proposal comes at a time when Canada's agricultural land base is already under significant pressure. According to the 2021 Census of Agriculture, Canada has lost more than five million hectares of farmland since 2001, an area roughly equivalent to the province of Nova Scotia. Against this backdrop, decisions affecting some of the country's most productive agricultural regions require the highest level of scrutiny and transparency.

Beyond the direct loss of land, the proposed project could have significant and lasting consequences for farm operations. The fragmentation of land holdings, reduced field access, disruptions to drainage systems, increased operating inefficiencies, and constraints on the movement of emergency services, machinery, livestock, and agricultural products all risk undermining the productivity and competitiveness of affected farm businesses. These impacts extend well beyond the physical footprint of the rail line and have not been adequately assessed or publicly examined.

We are deeply concerned that decisions appear to be advancing in the absence of a transparent evaluation of alternative approaches to achieving the project's stated objectives. **Before any further work proceeds, the Government of Canada should pause the project and commission an independent review to assess the full economic, agricultural, social, environmental, and transportation implications of the proposal.**

Such a review should specifically examine:

- Alternative route alignments that would minimize impacts on farmland and rural communities;
- Whether an investment estimated at between $75 billion and $113 billion[1] represents the most effective means of achieving the project's transportation objectives;
- The comparative costs, benefits, and risks of all available options for improving passenger rail service in the Quebec City-Windsor corridor; and
- The long-term public interest implications for taxpayers, landowners, and future generations.

The review process must be independent, transparent, and supported by meaningful consultation with affected landowners, farm organizations, municipalities, Indigenous communities, and other stakeholders. All underlying analyses, assumptions, and findings should be made publicly available to ensure confidence in the decision-making process.

Given the irreversible consequences associated with land acquisition and corridor selection, we respectfully request that no further steps be taken to advance the project, including expropriate, route finalization, or construction-related activities, until the independent review has been completed and its findings made public.

[1] Canada's Eastern Corridor High-Speed Rail: A Cost Analysis using Global Data

Canada can and should improve passenger transportation infrastructure. However, such investments must be based on a full and transparent assessment of all available options and must not proceed without a clear understanding of the impacts on Canada's agricultural resources and food production capacity.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and your officials to discuss these concerns and identify solutions that balance transportation objectives with the protection of Canada's finite agricultural land base.

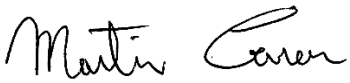
Sincerely,



Keith Currie
President
Canadian Federation of Agriculture



Drew Spoelstra
President
Ontario Federation of Agriculture



Martin Caron
President
Union des producteurs agricoles

Cc: Michael Vandergrift, Deputy Minister, Transport Canada
Lawrence Hanson, Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada