



For Release: Feb. 24, 2017

To The Editor:

Transportation and Infrastructure Minister Bill Fraser was quoted last week suggesting Canadian National may drop freight service between Moncton and Campbellton if traffic doesn't pick up.

According to Mr. Fraser, a clause in a 2014 agreement between the province and CN gives the railway the right to discontinue the line by 2019 if use decreases for two consecutive years below 2012 levels.

This scenario is ominous news for business in Greater Moncton and beyond. This rail line is a critical route to carry freight between our region and Central Canada. Several Greater Moncton companies rely on CN to deliver their products to market. As well, Via Rail leases the same line for its three-times-a-week *Ocean* run between Halifax and Montreal. Via has communicated its desire to increase the frequency of service from Moncton but this would be impossible should CN close the line.

If rail traffic falls and CN decides to drop this crucial rail link, it will jeopardize the ability to move both goods and people from Greater Moncton to other points in eastern and central Canada.

Our colleagues at the Miramichi Chamber of Commerce and others who would be impacted in northern New Brunswick have been working with government and CN to head off such a scenario. But this issue requires an all-out effort involving the Greater Moncton business community and our elected representatives at both the federal and provincial level.

The prospect of losing a vital rail link that connects our community to the rest of Canada should be a priority for all of us. If government has infrastructure money to spend, it should use some of it to ensure New Brunswick and Nova Scotia have a comparable level of rail service enjoyed by the rest of Canada.

Carol O'Reilly
CEO, Greater Moncton Chamber of Commerce