

Dear Leaders and Representatives,

When people speak about Canada “from coast to coast to coast,” Vancouver Island is often overlooked. Yet this 460-kilometre-long island played a foundational role in the creation of British Columbia and in uniting Canada as a nation in the late 1800s. As part of that history, a commitment was made to maintain a railway on Vancouver Island in perpetuity.

Today, in 2026, the case for restoring and modernizing the Island Rail Corridor is stronger than ever. The opportunity extends far beyond transportation. It is deeply connected to many of the socio-economic, environmental, and infrastructure challenges facing Vancouver Island and British Columbia today.

I encourage you to consider the following questions:

- How do we attract and support new industries on Vancouver Island as the forestry sector declines, while creating stable long-term jobs?
- How do we accommodate rapid population growth while minimizing impacts on land and natural ecosystems?
- How do we address chronic congestion on the Malahat and growing traffic pressures throughout the Capital Regional District, from the Westshore and Langford to Victoria?
- How do we reduce emissions while providing a safe, accessible transportation alternative for the many people who cannot drive, should not drive, or cannot afford to drive?
- How do we move heavy and hazardous materials more safely without relying exclusively on highways shared with distracted and time-pressured commuter traffic?
- How do we strengthen Vancouver Island’s tourism industry and improve its reach and relevance on the world stage?
- How do we support affordable, higher-density housing with lower parking requirements and reduced infrastructure costs?
- How do we create safer opportunities for walking, cycling, and other forms of micro-mobility?
- How do we connect communities from Courtenay and Port Alberni to Nanaimo and Victoria through a seamless and integrated transportation network?

One answer ties all of these priorities together: reimagining the Island Rail Corridor with modern passenger and freight rail service, integrated transit connections, and multi-use trails alongside the corridor.

Continuing to rely almost exclusively on highway expansion will place increasing pressure on taxpayers while offering only temporary congestion relief. Expanding highways through environmentally sensitive terrain is enormously expensive and ultimately limited in effectiveness. By comparison, the Island Rail Corridor offers a long-term alternative for moving both people and goods efficiently across Vancouver Island. If properly maintained, the corridor could also contribute to emergency resilience and serve as a strategic firebreak in certain areas.

Yes, restoring the corridor and addressing First Nations concerns and partnerships will require significant investment. Estimates may exceed \$1 billion. However, this remains comparable to, or less than, the projected cost of major highway expansion projects such as widening the Malahat through Goldstream Provincial Park, which has been estimated in the multi-billion-dollar range due to challenging terrain and geology.

The Island Rail Corridor represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to invest in nation-building infrastructure that supports economic growth, housing, sustainability, safety, tourism, and regional connectivity for decades to come.

I respectfully ask that you prioritize the restoration and modernization of the Island Rail Corridor and help provide the leadership needed to move this vision forward. We need strong leadership to make this happen, and I hope you are that leader.

Sincerely,
A Concerned Canadian Resident