

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Restore Island Rail Society Tracks Candidate Positions on the Island Rail Corridor Ahead of 2026 General Election

Nonpartisan campaign aims to inform over 60,000 followers including over 40,600 petition signers about where local candidates stand on rail restoration.

VANCOUVER ISLAND, BC - With British Columbia's 2026 general local election approaching, the Restore Island Rail Society is launching a nonpartisan grass-roots effort to inform voters across Vancouver Island about where candidates for municipal office stand on restoring passenger and freight rail service along the Island Rail corridor.

The Society has published a dedicated election resource at restoreislandrail.com/election-2026, where it will track and share candidate positions with its network of more than 60,000 followers including over 40,600 supporters who have signed its petition at <https://www.change.org/RestoreIslandRail>, reaching an estimated 1 to 1.6 million organic views per month across its channels.

"We're not telling anyone who to vote for," the Society said. "We're making sure voters have the information they need to know where candidates actually stand on one of the most consequential infrastructure decisions facing this Island."

Candidate Positions

As part of the initiative, the Society will identify and publicise candidates who make themselves known as corridor champions from every municipality within the five regional districts on Vancouver Island.

Candidate Questionnaire

To help voters evaluate where candidates stand, the Society has released a downloadable set of questions for candidates covering topics including whether they would prioritize Island rail, how they view the link between zoning and transit-oriented development, the case for an integrated rail-bus-trail network, the importance of island-wide regional planning, and the financial and legal risks of decommissioning the corridor. A 2025 Stantec report estimated it could cost Vancouver Island taxpayers between \$302 million and \$751 million if the rail infrastructure were to be removed.

Early Endorsements

Several candidates in Nanaimo, Colwood, and Victoria have already voiced support for the corridor's restoration, citing its potential to reduce highway congestion, and emissions, address safety concerns on the Malahat highway, strengthen regional economic resilience,

and support reconciliation efforts through initiatives such as the Reconciliation Corridor Initiative signed in December 2025. Their full statements and platform links are posted on the Society's election page at <https://restoreislandrail.com/election-2026>.

About Restore Island Rail Society

Restore Island Rail Society is a grass roots Vancouver Island advocacy organization working to preserve and modernize the Island Rail Corridor for passenger and freight service between Victoria and Courtenay and Parksville and Port Alberni. The Society engages in public education, ridership analysis, and coalition-building with municipal, regional, provincial, First Nations, and federal partners and is a registered 3rd Party Advertiser for the 2026 General Election.

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