



ASSOCIATION OF MANITOBA MUNICIPALITIES

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Ms. Bibiane Ouellette
Clerk of the Committee
Room 5-77
131 Queen Street
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

While the Canadian transportation system has grown and changed over the last 100 years, the importance of the rail line for many communities has not. It is because of the importance of rail lines to communities that our association wishes to comment on Bill C-8: An Act to amend the Canada Transportation Act (railway transportation).

The Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM) is the voice of municipal government in Manitoba and represents all incorporated municipalities in the province, urban and rural. Because of our mandate, our association closely follows key issues that impact our membership. There is little doubt that changes to the Canada Transportation Act will have an impact on Manitoba communities.

In general the AMM is supportive of Bill C-8 as it makes strides to strengthen the abandonment process. Many communities in Manitoba have felt the negative effects of rail line closures and we are pleased to see this Bill strengthen some aspects of the process for abandonment.

Right now in Manitoba communities are feeling the impact of the abandonment of the Morris to Mariapolis Line. With other lines in the early stages of the abandonment process, other communities will soon feel the same negative impacts. It is for this reason that rail line abandonment is of importance to our association.

The challenge for municipalities is that the movement of the vast majority of products will not stop just because the rail line is gone. What was once transported on the rail line will now be moved on municipal roads, increasing the pressure on municipal infrastructure. However the impacts of this shift will be difficult to predict as regular traffic patterns will change with the loss of the rail line. Some products will move on the roads to the next closest rail line, while others may just move by

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road to local urban areas where they will be trucked to their destination. As municipalities work diligently to strategically plan infrastructure investments, the changes brought about by rail line abandonment is counter productive.

It is for this reason that the AMM is pleased to see a commitment from the Federal Government to convene a Level of Service Review. We believe such a review is necessary to deal with the more fundamental issues that fall outside the scope of Bill C-8. Rail lines are critical components of the overall transportation system in Manitoba and across Canada, and it is imperative that they operate at maximum efficiency. We believe that a level of service review is much needed and will go a long way toward improving the efficiency of the current transportation system. As the association that represents communities in Manitoba, we also see an important role for our organization in this review.

In conclusion, Bill C-8: An Act to amend the Canada Transportation Act (railway transportation) begins the necessary process for improving the rail line system in Canada and as such the AMM supports this Bill in its current form.

Sincerely,

Ron Bell
President

