

**COALITION FOR
ALGOMA
PASSENGER
TRAINS.CA**



August 21, 2006

The Honourable Lawrence Cannon
Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities
Government of Canada
Tower C - 330 Sparks St.
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1A 0N5

Dear Minister Cannon:

Re: Winter Schedule of Passenger Train

On behalf of the Coalition for the Algoma Passenger Train (CAPT), I am writing you with regard to the Algoma Central Railway passenger train. We wish to present to you our concerns about the winter schedule and the lack of attention being given by both federal and provincial governments to the passenger service and the resultant economic implications.

In general we have been very happy with the train service and we understand that it is a challenge to devise a schedule that accommodates the various groups of people using the passenger train_cottagers (camp owners and lease-holders), tourists, resort operators, residents of towns on the line. Representatives from some of these groups have formed CAPT which we hope will facilitate communications between us, the Federal Ministry of Transport, the Ontario Ministry of Northern Development, the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, and CN Passenger Services.

We find the winter passenger schedule which began in the fall of 2004 to be very unsatisfactory. Of particular concern is the fact that passengers who work Monday to Friday can no longer travel north for the weekend without taking a day off on Friday or Monday. Not only have members of our coalition been forced to reduce our use of the train, but we have also noticed that there are many fewer passengers than was the case prior to October, 2004. When the previous winter schedule was in effect, passengers from long distances took return trips on the passenger train when the tour train was not operating. The new schedule has reduced the number of those passengers as well. The reduction in service threatens the sustainability of the passenger train and reduces the economic potential for tourism in Algoma. We ask you to please restore the previous

winter schedule beginning this fall, 2006. Alternatively, we suggest that at least the schedule be organized in such a way that it is possible to travel north on Saturday and south on Sunday and to consider a seasonal schedule that would run one train from October 15 to Christmas and end of March to May. Savings could be made during those periods when there are very few passengers.

There is great potential for tourism development along the ACR line including ecotourism, hunting, fishing, snowmobiling. "Train-in" and "fly-in" tourist destinations have become increasingly popular as tourists are seeking more secluded settings. We are approaching the Federal Ministry of Transport, the Ontario Ministry of Northern Development and Mines and the Ontario Ministry of Tourism to provide the appropriate supports needed to enable the economic development potential of the area serviced by Algoma Central Passenger Train. With federal and provincial support, as well as increased marketing and collaborative planning by the economic development and tourism officers from Sault Ste. Marie, Hearst and Dubreuilville, significant growth of the social economic and employment benefits of Algoma's Passenger Trains could be achieved.

Since the passenger train receives financial support from the Federal Government to ensure continued service to the passengers, the passengers' needs, and the social, economic and employment repercussions to the region, should be considered in schedule planning.

Our organization would be happy to meet with you to discuss these issues and explore ways in which we can work together to find solutions of benefit to all of us.

Sincerely,

Linda Savory Gordon,
Chair, Coalition for Algoma Passenger Trains (CAPT)

cc Mr. Terry O'Brien, Director of Passenger Train Services, CN
Mr. Louis Ranger, Deputy Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities
Hon. Rick Bartolucci, Minister of Northern Development and Mines, Ontario
Ms Suzanne Hebert, Deputy Minister of Northern Development and Mines
Hon. Jim Bradley, Minister of Tourism, Ontario
Mr. David Lindsay, Deputy Minister of Tourism
Mr. Tony Martin, MP, Sault Ste. Marie Riding
Mr. Brent St. Denis, MP, Algoma-Manitoulin-Kapuskasing Riding
Mr. David Oraziotti, MPP, Sault Ste. Marie
Mr/ Mike Brown, MPP, Algoma-Manitoulin