

March 13th, 2026

Honourable Steven MacKinnon  
Minister of Transport  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON  
K1A 0A6

Honourable Gregor Robertson  
Minister of Housing and Infrastructure  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON  
K1A 0A6

Dear Ministers MacKinnon and Robinson:

**Re: The Alto High-Speed Rail Network**

I am writing on behalf of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) to share the significant concerns being raised by our members, particularly those in Eastern Ontario, regarding the proposed high-speed rail network between Toronto and Montreal.

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture is the largest general farm organization in the province, proudly representing more than 38,000 farm families. OFA serves as a strong voice for Ontario farmers and the broader agri-food sector on issues, legislation, and policy administered by all levels of government. Ontario's agri-food system, from farms and greenhouses to processors, distributors, retailers, and foodservice, contributed approximately \$51.4 billion to the provincial economy in 2024, making it one of Ontario's most important economic drivers and supporting both rural and urban communities.

Given the importance of this sector, it is essential that farm businesses and rural communities be meaningfully consulted on major infrastructure projects that could affect the sustainability and viability of agricultural operations.

Our members are deeply concerned about the disruption and long-term impacts that the proposed Alto high-speed rail network could have on farm operations and rural communities along the corridor. We are particularly troubled by the rapid progression of this project without clear evidence of meaningful consultation with the agricultural sector or adequately addressing identified needs.

These concerns were recently underscored at the Canadian Federation of Agriculture's 2026 Annual General Meeting, where OFA and l'Union des producteurs agricoles (UPA) of Québec jointly supported a resolution calling on Alto to suspend further advancement of the project until a comprehensive assessment of its economic, social, and environmental impacts has been conducted, and an "agriculture-first" lens applied.

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At present, it remains unclear how Alto intends to avoid or mitigate impacts to prime agricultural land, and many of our members are concerned about the long-term viability of their farm businesses should the project proceed as proposed. Potential impacts are significant and, in many cases, irreversible. They include fragmentation of farm properties, disruption to agricultural drainage systems, risks associated with stray voltage from rail infrastructure, and the loss or significant detouring of critical rural and farm access routes.

Compounding these concerns is the fact that many of the affected rural communities will not be directly served by the proposed rail system. For those communities, the project presents the prospect of substantial disruption and loss without a clear local benefit. While Alto has indicated that a compensation framework is under development, there is currently no agricultural advisory council in place to help inform that process, and no draft details have been shared regarding how agricultural impacts would be addressed.

More broadly, our membership remains skeptical that the proposed high-speed rail network will ultimately provide the level of sustainable, efficient transportation benefit required to justify its significant financial, environmental, and land-use costs. While Alto has indicated that it intends to avoid impacts to farmland wherever possible, we have yet to see clear evidence or detailed planning that substantiates these commitments.

The OFA appreciates the opportunity to share our members' perspectives. The proposed rail project has become a topic of frequent and serious discussion among farmers across the corridor and beyond. We would welcome the opportunity to work with the federal government to ensure that any future decisions fully consider the impacts on Canada's agri-food sector and support policies that protect the long-term sustainability of farm businesses and rural communities.

Sincerely,



Drew Spoelstra  
President

Cc: Honourable Heath MacDonald, Minister of Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada  
OFA Board of Directors