

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION		GOVERNMENT RESPONSE
1	<p>That the Government of Canada collaborate with all stakeholders, including provincial and territorial governments, Indigenous communities, municipalities, as well as public and private operators, to encourage the coordination of intercity bus routes with passenger rail and air travel.</p>	<p>The Government acknowledges the recommendation.</p> <p>The Government remains open to engaging provincial colleagues, given their authority to regulate bus services on recent sectoral developments and potential opportunities to support intercity bus services.</p> <p>It should be noted that through the 1954 <i>Motor Vehicle Transport Act</i>, Parliament delegated authority to issue licenses to interprovincial and international carriers to provincial licensing bodies and incorporated provincial rules for intra-provincial carriers so that they that they would also apply to interprovincial services. As such, provinces and territories are best positioned to develop and administer solutions to support the intercity bus sector.</p> <p>In 2018, in response to Greyhound’s elimination of services in western Canada, the Government convened provinces and territories to identify potential solutions and offered cost-shared, transitional funding to fill service gaps. This offer was accepted by British Columbia and the funding was used to establish services for rural, remote and Indigenous communities in northern British Columbia.</p> <p>In 2021, following Greyhound’s discontinuation of all domestic services, the Government encouraged collaboration with provincial and territorial colleagues to assess impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the intercity bus sector and identify potential innovative solutions. These discussions underscored each region’s unique needs, tailored regulatory approaches adopted by provincial and territorial governments, and the potential drawbacks and real risks of advancing a national or one-size-fits-all approach. Instead, consensus was reached on an approach where provinces and territories would continue to monitor recent sectoral developments and identify potential opportunities to support intercity bus.</p> <p>The Government remains open to engaging with provincial and territorial colleagues to identify opportunities to support bus services and their connectivity to other modes, including passenger rail, air, active transportation and public transit.</p> <p>While VIA Rail is an arm’s-length Crown Corporation and is responsible for its operational decisions (including scheduling and service levels), the Government continues to collaborate with VIA Rail to identify ways to integrate their services with other modes within Canada’s national passenger transportation network.</p>
2	<p>That the Government of Canada work the provinces and territories and with private and public bus operators to facilitate</p>	<p>The Government acknowledges the recommendation.</p> <p>Since Parliament’s delegation of the authority to issue licenses for interprovincial and international bus services</p>

	<p>the creation of a non-profit, national clearing house/communications platform to allow for seamless travel between provinces for passengers.</p>	<p>to provincial and territorial governments in 1954, provinces and territories have developed tailored approaches to intercity bus services based on the unique mobility needs within their respective jurisdictions. As such, provinces and territories are best positioned to develop and administer solutions to support the intercity bus sector within their jurisdiction.</p> <p>During recent federal-provincial-territorial engagement, the Government committed to be open to engage on potential solutions and provinces and territories agreed to monitor bus services within their respective jurisdictions and identify any opportunities to support the sector. While no concrete proposals have been received to date, the Government of Canada remains open to engaging with provinces and territories regarding potential opportunities to strengthen Canada’s intercity bus network.</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>That VIA Rail establish a system to provide real-time reporting of arrivals and departures to other modes of transportation (ex. taxis, ride-sharing operators, etc.) to facilitate timely and convenient intermodal connections.</p>	<p>The Government supports the recommendation.</p> <p>Work is currently ongoing to advance this recommendation. Transport Canada is currently working closely with VIA Rail as the Corporation conducts a Strategic Service Review to identify opportunities to enhance existing services, including improving intermodal connectivity.</p> <p>While train status updates can be consulted on VIA Rail’s app and website, the Corporation is also currently developing new additional methods to systemize its communications with other transportation providers regarding train status. VIA Rail is also establishing new digital and social media channels to improve its public communication of delays and service interruptions.</p> <p>VIA Rail is an arm’s-length Crown Corporation that reports to Parliament through the Minister of Transport. However, VIA Rail is responsible for its operational decisions, including service levels, scheduling and real-time reporting.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>That the Government of Canada collaborate with all stakeholders, including provincial and territorial governments, Indigenous communities, municipalities, as well as public and private operators, to assess and address the current knowledge gaps with regards to the habits and needs of intercity transit users in Canada.</p>	<p>The Government supports the recommendation.</p> <p>Transport Canada collects data on all modes, including intercity bus, to monitor Canada’s national transportation system and to inform Government policies. Through intergovernmental forums such as the Council of Ministers Responsible for Transportation and Highway Safety, provinces and territories have also shared information regarding the current state of the intercity bus sector within their jurisdiction. The Government as well as provinces and territories continue to closely monitor this sector and, as needed, can leverage intergovernmental forums to identify recent developments as well as current knowledge gaps.</p> <p>The Government also recognizes interprovincial and international carriers’ obligations to meet existing data requirements. As per the <i>Transportation Information Regulations</i>, intercity bus carriers that operate interprovincial or international services are required to</p>

		submit operational information, including ridership and current scheduling, to Transport Canada as often as on a quarterly basis. The Government also strongly encourages intra-provincial intercity bus carriers to share their data with provincial governments to help inform their policies to support of the intercity bus sector.
5	That the Government of Canada expand the Rural Transit Solutions Fund to incentivize the development of intercommunity rural routes and allow private bus carriers providing services on such routes to access the Fund.	<p>The Government acknowledges the recommendation.</p> <p>The Rural Transit Solutions Fund is a five year (2021-2026) \$250 million program which supports rural public transit solutions across the country. With Rural Transit Solutions Fund funding, smaller communities and organizations as well as Indigenous communities are able to develop locally-driven transit solutions which help people living in rural and remote communities do their day-to-day activities including connecting with neighbouring communities.</p> <p>One example of the Rural Transit Solutions Fund supporting intercommunity rural public transit is the Acadian Peninsula Regional Service Commissions project that is connecting the rural communities on New Brunswick’s Acadian Peninsula.</p> <p>The Rural Transit Solutions Fund continues to work with organizations, including provinces and territories, across the country to further develop rural public transit. For example, in Nova Scotia, the Rural Transit Solutions Fund is providing funding to strengthen the regional transit systems that are being operated by many transit organizations known as “Rural Rides.”</p> <p>Infrastructure Canada has recently released its response to feedback through its national public engagement sessions on permanent federal funding for public transit and active transportation, which beginning in 2026-27 will support sustainable transportation options for communities of all sizes across Canada. Program details of the envelope averaging \$3 billion per year will be announced in the coming months.</p>
6	That the Government of Canada recognize that the private sector plays an important role in providing intercity bus service and take steps to harmonize licensing requirements between provinces, while respecting provincial and territorial jurisdiction.	<p>The Government supports the recommendation.</p> <p>The Government recognizes the important role of the private sector in delivering intercity bus services that travellers can rely on to do their daily activities. The Government also recognizes that, as per the 1954 <i>Motor Vehicle Transport Act</i>, the authority to issue operating licenses was delegated to provincial and territorial governments.</p> <p>As such, while the Government supports greater harmonization of licensing requirements, it acknowledges that provinces and territories have the discretion to develop licensing requirements for intercity bus services within their jurisdiction and cannot be compelled by the Government to issue licenses or alter their existing licensing requirements.</p>
7	That the Government of Canada recognize its role in delivering	The Government supports the recommendation.

<p>safe, reliable and affordable inter-regional transit to Indigenous communities, as part of its responsibility towards Indigenous reconciliation.</p>	<p>A minimum of 10 percent of the Rural Transit Solutions Fund’s total funding amount will be allocated to projects that benefit Indigenous populations and communities. While the Rural Transit Solutions Fund is not designed to support long-distance inter-regional travel routes that connect cities across regions, its goal is to support the day-to-day movement of local residents in communities to help them get to work, school, appointments and visit loved ones. In some instances, this could include longer routes, notably for remote, northern and Indigenous communities.</p> <p>Following Greyhound’s exit from western Canada in 2018, the Government also offered impacted provinces and territories access to transitional funding to support the creation of new bus services to fill gaps. Funds were offered on a temporary, cost-shared basis through to March 31, 2021. British Columbia accepted this offer and the Government provided funding to support the creation of British Columbia Bus North. This service provides a safe, reliable public transit option along Highway 16, also known as the “Highway of Tears” due to the high number of Indigenous women and girls murdered while hitchhiking in the area. This service is currently maintained with unused federal and provincial Safe Restart Agreement funding.</p> <p>The Government is open to engaging with provinces and territories, along with Indigenous Peoples, to identify potential solutions to support intercity bus services for Indigenous communities.</p>
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