



April 7, 2026

Alto
Government of Canada

Submitted via Online Public Consultation Portal

To Whom it May Concern,

Re: *Comments on the Toronto – Quebec City High-Speed Rail Network*

Beef Farmers of Ontario (BFO) appreciates the opportunity to comment on *Alto's Toronto – Quebec City High-Speed Rail Network*. BFO represents the 19,000 beef farmers in Ontario by advocating in the areas of sustainability, animal health and care, environment, food safety, and domestic and export market development.

Ontario's beef sector contributes \$2.99 billion to Ontario's GDP on an annual basis and sustains more than 56,400 jobs through primary production, processing and retail. Ontario's beef farmers also provide important ecological goods and services, especially through the management of grasslands, that protect and enhance Ontario's environment. This includes sequestering carbon in the soil, providing habitat for wildlife and species at risk, oxygen production, water and nutrient cycling, and maintaining and improving soil health.

A key priority for BFO and our members is the preservation of Ontario's agricultural land base. We strongly believe the best way to protect Ontario's agricultural lands is through sound provincial land use policy that sees agricultural lands, including marginal lands used for livestock grazing and carbon sequestration, protected as the highest and best use of Ontario's arable land.

At our Annual General Meeting this past February, our members strongly voted to oppose the project as proposed. This clear direction reflects the serious and widespread concern among beef farmers about the impact this development would have on farm families, rural communities, and Ontario's agricultural land base.

While BFO supports improved transportation options and recognizes the importance of strategic infrastructure investments, the current proposed rail alignments through central and eastern Ontario would be devastating to the beef sector and the broader agricultural community. The proposed route would cut through key beef producing counties across central and eastern Ontario, expropriating and dividing farms with a fenced rail corridor, closing local roads, disrupting wildlife movement, and delivering no clear social or economic benefit to the affected rural communities - who would not even have access to the service.

Ontario's farmland is a finite and irreplaceable resource. For beef farmers, maintaining large, contiguous land bases is essential for pasture, feed production, livestock movement, drainage systems, and overall operational efficiency. The proposed corridor risks breaking farms into smaller, less viable parcels, disrupting tile drainage systems critical to crop production, and creating long-term operational and financial burdens associated with fencing, crossings, and biosecurity concerns.

BFO stands united with the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) and l'Union des producteurs agricoles (UPA) and calls on the federal government and the Minister of Transport to suspend the project until these concerns are fully and transparently addressed. If the project were ever to proceed, it must guarantee full access to farmland, establish properly sized agricultural crossings where required, and ensure fair and proportional compensation that reflects the permanent and significant impact of a rail corridor on agricultural operations.

While prime agricultural lands have been identified as areas of concern by OFA and UPA, BFO believes no lands currently in agricultural production should be impacted by this project - including marginal lands essential to livestock and forage production - unless comprehensive mitigation strategies, properly designed agricultural accommodations, and compensation that fully reflects both immediate and long-term operational impacts are secured in advance.

As outlined by OFA and UPA in their February 27, 2026 statement, farm organizations are calling on governments and Alto to:

- Stay out of prime agricultural areas, and BFO would add, actively farmed lands including pasture and marginal land used for beef farming
- Avoid breaking farms into smaller pieces and keep fields and farm operations whole
- Protect farm drainage systems that are essential for crop production
- Address farmers' concerns about construction impacts and ongoing costs, including fencing, and the building, upgrading and long-term maintenance of safe farm crossings for equipment and livestock
- Ensure agricultural impact assessments are independent, thorough and publicly available

BFO stands firmly with OFA and UPA in advocating for an agriculture-first approach and urges the Government of Canada and the federal Minister of Transport to take immediate action to halt the Alto High-Speed Rail project. BFO remains committed to continued dialogue and further engagement to ensure that the voices of Ontario's beef farmers are heard and considered in future discussions.

Sincerely,



Jason Leblond
President