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Moose Consortium lodges complaint with Competition Bureau against Chelsea and MRC des Collines-de-l'Outaouais



LILY Ryan



Commercial passenger railway plan proposed by Moose Consortium. PHOTO: POST FILES

Following what Moose Consortium has documented as a complete shut-out of communications on the part of Chelsea Municipality and the MRC des Collines-de-l'Outaouais, the train transit company has filed a complaint with Canada's Competition Bureau. General Director of Moose, Joseph Potvin, explained to the *Post* that Moose has taken repeated steps to propose a commuter rail line through Chelsea, with "zero response" from Chelsea. Under the "Abuse of dominant position" provision of the Canadian competition act,

the passenger railway company has deposited files to back up the complaint against both Chelsea Municipality and the MRC des Collines-de-l'Outaouais.

The complaint addresses only the lack of response to the communications from the company, and not other discussions on the matter of the railway, Mr Potvin told the *Post*. Mayor of Chelsea, Caryl Green, responded to the *Post* that council was unanimous in its decision to not consider the Moose Consortium proposal.

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"We made a commitment to Transcollines as the public transit for the municipality," the mayor explained. "With such a low population density, there is not room for two modes of public transportation. Back when the Steam Train was still a possibility for returning, we looked at that project and the recreational trail project proposed by Sentier Chelsea Trails for the rail corridor." She went on to note that when the steam train was no longer an option, council retained only the recreational trail.

At issue is Chelsea council's recent decision to move forward with dismantling the railway portion damaged by a washout in 2011. Moose argues that "this 'abuse of dominant position' complaint requires immediate action to prevent the imminent,

substantial and permanent reduction of open competitive market opportunities and general transportation market accessibility that will otherwise occur when the municipal operators of a bus service, having officially expressed their opposition to potential competition from an independent commercial railway service, are now proceeding with a contract to dismantle approximately 20 km of the only railway providing a connection between the northern and central areas of Canada's national capital region, without attempting to lease or sell this infrastructure to any railway development company for continued railway operations." (Article 1 of the complaint filed June 14 with the Competition Bureau). The *Post* contacted MRC des-Collines-de-l'Outaouais but received no response by press time.