

PRESS RELEASE

Rideau Lakes Group Addresses Federal Government's Announcement for a Stop in Kingston and Reaffirms Position of No Alto High-Speed Rail

As strong opposition to the Alto High Speed Rail project grows, communities across municipal boundaries continue to unite, because the threat does not stop at any one town's edge.

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RIDEAU LAKES, ONTARIO — Rideau Lakes citizens and council stand united in protesting Alto's High-Speed Rail (HSR) project. In response to the announcement made by Steven MacKinnon, on June 22nd, about a potential Kingston stop, The Rideau Lakes Against Alto HSR Group would like to reaffirm their position that they do **not** support **High-Speed Rail** (HSR) along **any** corridor being proposed through Ontario, Quebec, or any other part of Canada.

The originally proposed southern corridor, as well as any new corridor that would involve Kingston, has the potential to cut directly through Rideau Lakes, as well as our surrounding communities, which would negatively affect us all. HSR along any corridor will still cut through farmland, nature, and communities, even if some of it would run along the 401. Once again, **our position is clear- No Alto, anywhere!**

The Rideau Lakes group opposes the Alto HSR project for many reasons, including the exorbitant expense for HSR, leading to long-term generational costs, disruption of agricultural operations, bisecting communities, increasing delays for emergency services, and destroying nature and heritage (e.g., UNESCO designated Frontenac Arch Biosphere and the Rideau Canal).

Our government is asking for an unreasonable amount of sacrifice from citizens, farms, businesses and communities across the corridor for the benefit of very few. Canadians are experiencing an unheard amount of high stress, poverty, homelessness and food insecurity. High Speed Rail not only does nothing to address these issues, but would make them much worse, by expropriating thousands of homes and farms across two provinces.

The Alto HSR is being touted as a nation building project, but in reality, it would divide large portions of our nation, due to the dead-ending of rural roads with a 1000km-long fenced off corridor, with no level road crossings through well established and thriving communities.

Instead of focusing on the speed of travel, why not focus on having a more reliable regional passenger rail service on dedicated tracks for VIA Rail? This would eliminate the need for a fenced-off track that does not have level road crossings and therefore would not result in dead-ended roads or division of communities.

Dedicated High Frequency Rail infrastructure, as opposed to High Speed Rail should be located alongside existing major railway tracks rather than constructing a new HSR corridor through established communities and farmland. HFR could allow more continuous higher speeds alongside already existing tracks.

Rideau Lakes Against Alto HSR Group Main Recommendations:

1. Avoid HSR along any corridor through Ontario, Quebec, and Canada.
2. Fix our regional train system by building HFR versus HSR.
3. Ensure transparency for new rail systems by Alto or any group.
4. Address questions raised by council members, business owners, and community groups before proceeding with the planning of any railway corridor.

About Rideau Lakes Against Alto HSR Group

Rideau Lakes Against Alto HSR is a group of residents, council members, farmers, and business owners in the Municipality of Rideau Lakes. Formed in direct response to the announcement of the Alto HSR southern route, the group mobilized almost immediately, collaboratively organizing public information social media, letters, events, town halls, signs, and a web page with resources (<https://www.rideaulakes.ca/alto>). The group stands with our neighbouring communities in Ontario and Quebec in voicing “No Alto”.

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