



document prepared by

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with regards to

**Projet de réseau électrique métropolitain
de transport collectif**

The worst thing that will probably happen-in fact is already well underway-is not energy depletion, economic collapse, conventional war, or the expansion of totalitarian governments. As terrible as these catastrophes would be for us, they can be repaired in a few generations. The one process now going on that will take millions of years to correct is loss of genetic and species diversity by the destruction of natural habitats. **This is the folly our descendants are least likely to forgive us.**

E. O. Wilson ⁱ

Vice-president Al Gore reinforces Wilson's sentiment when, in speaking of climate change, he asks the question; how will we respond to our children when they ask if we were aware of the impending environmental catastrophe. Will we lie and say we were unaware? Will our children forgive us for squandering their future?ⁱⁱ

The two most serious issues that face us and which will severely impact all future generations are climate change and the loss of biodiversity. As serious as these issues are, there is no mention of them in any of the documents presented by the Caisse de Depot as justification for the REM project.

I submit this brief as a private citizen, resident of Rosemere and a user of both the St-Jerome train line and the Deux-Montagnes train line. I have a keen interest in the environment and I am a long time member of Sierra Club Canada. I am an active participant with Les Amis du Parc Meadowbrook, Eco-Nature Parc de la riviere des milles iles, and Sauvons l'Anse-a-l'Orme and I write this document because I fear for the future of our children and grandchildren and all future generations.

Montreal is years behind in the development of its public transportation system as compared to other North American cities. The first leg of the Metro was opened in late 1966 with additions that soon followed. The Montreal Metro is very popular, is well used and is proof that an efficient system will be welcomed.

Montreal, until recent years, had a limited commuter train system and as the population expanded off island to the suburbs; east, south, west and north, highways were built and the system quickly became highly congested. According to Mayor Alan DeSousa, mayor of the borough of Saint-Laurent, highways 13 and 15 now entertain 150,000 vehicles on a daily basis. We know that transportation is responsible for a minimum of 25 percent of the greenhouse gas that we produce and this must become a major concern to all and the major determinant in upgrading any and all commuter rail transportation for Montreal. Building and expanding highways clearly does not work.

The St-Jerome train line was put in place as a temporary measure during the construction on the Marius Dufresne Bridge but, after six months when construction was complete, the line was so popular and well used that it was made permanent. Since then more trains have been added to the schedule and more recently evening and weekend service have been added. This is more proof that people will use the trains if the trains are efficient and serve the population.

With regards to REM project I recently attended question period for the MRC Therese de Blainville council meeting and I asked if the MRC intended to submit a brief to these BAPE hearings. Paul

Larocque, the prefect of the MRC, responded by stating that this was not necessary, that the proposed REM plan would never pass since it served mostly low density population areas.

I agree with Mr. Larocque and this is the basis of my **first objection and recommendation**. The proposed routes are mostly in low density population areas and the design should be revised so that the train serves the population in a more efficient manner. The current proposal will only discourage the use of the train.

Appendix A shows the population growth for the cities that make up the Communauté Métropolitaine de Montréal. The table shows the populations for 2006 and 2011 and it shows the percentage change in the population for each of the towns. Statistics are derived from a Statistics Canada website but those towns highlighted in yellow were not available and the data was derived from a Google search. ⁱⁱⁱ

The numbers show clearly that the cities and towns with the greatest growth in population will not be served by the REM as proposed. On the first night of the information sessions held by the Caisse de Depot I asked the question as to why Blainville – Mirabel and Vaudreuil – Dorion were not being served by the REM. I was told that the mandate was not developed by the Caisse de Depot but instead was imposed on the Caisse. No further explanation was given.

The format of the Caisse de Depot information sessions was not transparent at all and was not designed to share information or solicit tough questions. The cynic in me leads me to be very suspicious and the first night of the BAPE information sessions reinforced my thoughts.

My **second recommendation** is to call for the suspension of this project and to request public hearings on the matter. The REM project is being rushed through and at a cost of \$3.5 billion of our pension money there should be no rush to begin. The Montreal area has a history of projects gone wrong and this project seems headed in the same direction.

The whole project seems to be a moving target. There are too many unanswered but important questions and there are too many changing factors. When asked what the return on investment would be, the answer was that no one knew. The fare structure for the new train is apparently unknown. The route for the train to the airport has changed several times. The most logical and shortest route is to approach the train from the south but the route will be from the north and it now is proposed to go through an area that is environmentally sensitive. Even the revised route has been revised a second time. Previously the train was to emerge from the airport near avenue Marie Curie and chemin St-Francois and now it will emerge near boulevard Alfred Nobel and rue Alexander Fleming.

According to news reports all city councillors for cities and towns that will be served by the REM are being asked to sign confidentiality agreements. The reason given is to prevent land speculation along the proposed route. This is nonsense since the proposed route is already known or is it. Is the proposed route another variable? Is there something that the Caisse is afraid of that will become the object of criticism by councillors at some later date. Why the need for secrecy and silence?

My **third recommendation** is that the project should be slowed and properly defined before going ahead. No one doubts the need for better public transportation but this project seems to be rushed and not well defined. I would like to see wider public input. Including improvements to the St-Jerome line is essential in meeting Montreal and Quebec greenhouse targets and in reducing traffic on highways 13 and 15.

The original plan for the St-Jerome line was for it to travel through the tunnel into Central Station. This was promised years ago but the REM project would derail this idea. The REM project would privatize the tunnel and this is something that I am firmly against. By going through the tunnel the St-Jerome line would reduce the overall trip by 10 to 15 minutes and it would encourage more people to use the line. This route for the St-Jerome line would still make transfers to the Metro at de la Concorde and Parc possible. It would also reduce the problems at the two level crossings in Montreal West by reducing the number of trains that travel that portion of the line.

My **fourth recommendation** is to cancel any attempt to privatize the tunnel. High speed train service to Ottawa, Trois Rivieres and Quebec City are dependent on the tunnel to improve their efficiency. The original plans for the St-Jerome line should be enacted and this train should be routed through the tunnel to Central Station to improve its efficiency.

My **fifth recommendation** and last point will be very unpopular but will be very necessary if we are to meet our greenhouse gas objectives. The problem of congestion is not due to inadequate roads or insufficient roads; it is solely due to the number of vehicles on the roads. The solution to congestion is to reduce the number of vehicles on the road but very few politicians have the courage to do so.

The model of London, England, while drastic, worked and reduced traffic overnight. Tolls must be reintroduced and any vehicle wishing to access Montreal must pay. However, the overall transportation system must be completely overhauled and upgraded before such a plan can be implemented. In London, between 7:00 AM and 6:00 PM, Monday to Friday, it costs \$20 Canadian to enter into the "congestion zone". Special exemptions have been granted in London but In London on the first day there was 1/3 less cars on the roads. It works.

Summary:

1. I fully support an improvement of the Montreal area public transportation system but I do not believe that the REM project is the right project.
2. I request that parliamentary hearings be held into the REM “réseau électrique métropolitain de transport collectif” to insure that a proper project is advanced that will best serve the entire population of the CMM
3. A proper analysis of this project should be undertaken and proper answers must be given before the go ahead is given. The first question should be “what is the mandate of the Caisse de Depot and where did this mandate arise from?”. Maybe the Caisse should not play any role in public transit.
4. The REM project should take into account the urban planning process. The current plan does not respect the PMAD; it does not respect the promise of a green belt nor does it respect the concept of the TOD.
5. I believe that the train routes should be revised to serve high to medium density populations instead of lower density populations. The train as designed will encourage the use of the automobile to bring passengers to the train and will only serve to discourage the use of the train.
6. The train routes as designed will require massive parking areas and will only destroy more natural and green space. The train route should be designed to encourage people to walk or bike to the train.
7. There should be no consideration given to the privatization of any part of the train system (tunnel, rolling stock, etc). This will result in a two tier or two category system and could possibly result in runaway costs to the consumers. Hospitals, schools and public transit should never be out of the public domain. In an ideal world public transit should be free.
8. The idea of the electric car or other advanced technologies is pure fantasy that may or may not happen in the future. The problem of greenhouse gases is NOW, and must be treated immediately.
9. The idea of permanent “car free days” must be advanced and people must be encouraged to take public transit. Moral suasion is preferable but does not always work and authorities must face this reality.
10. Finally, tolls must be seriously considered as an alternative and a serious deterrent to the use of cars. Tolls are in use in almost every jurisdiction in North America and tolls were finally put in place for the highway 25 bridge to Montreal. The bridge is well used and is proof that the concept can be accepted but every dollar collected must be used to improve the quality of our environment.

Every project, every decision that is made by government or for private projects must be analyzed for its impact on the environment both in terms of climate change and the impact of biodiversity loss. Our children and Mother Nature will not forgive our transgressions if we do not listen..

Appendix A: Census data for the towns and cities of the CMM

	2011	2006	% change
Baie-d'Urfé	3,850	3,902	-1.3
Beaconsfield	19,505	19,194	1.6
Beauharnois	12,011	11,918	0.8
Beloil	20,783	18,927	9.8
Blainville	53,510	46,493	15.1
Boisbriand	26,816	26,468	1.3
Bois-des-Filion	9,485	8,383	13.1
Boucherville	40,753	39,062	4.3
Brossard	79,273	71,154	11.4
Calixa-Lavallée	504		
Candiac	19,876	15,947	24.6
Carignan	7,966	7,426	7.3
Chambly	25,571	22,608	13.1
Charlemagne	5,853	5,594	4.6
Châteauguay	45,904	42,786	7.3
Contrecoeur	6,252		
Côte Saint-Luc	32,321	31,395	2.9
Delson	7,462	7,322	1.9
Deux-Montagnes	17,552	17,402	0.9
Dollard-des-Ormeaux	49,637	48,930	1.4
Dorval	18,208	18,088	0.7
Hampstead	7,153	6,996	2.2
Hudson	5,135	5,088	0.9
Kirkland	21,253	20,491	3.7
La Prairie	23,357	21,763	7.3
L'Assomption	20,065	16,723	20.0
Laval	401,553	368,709	8.9
Léry	2,307	2,385	-3.3
Les Cèdres	6,079	5,732	6.1
L'Île-Cadieux	105	128	-18.0
L'Île-Dorval	5	0	
L'Île-Perrot	10,503	9,927	5.8
Longueuil	231,409	229,330	0.9
Lorraine	9,479	9,613	-1.4

	2011	2006	% change
McMasterville	5,615	5,234	7.3
Mercier	11,584	10,121	14.5
Mirabel	41,957	34,626	21.2
Montreal	1,649,519	1,620,693	1.8
Montreal West	5,085	5,184	-1.9
Montréal-Est	3,728	3,822	-2.5
Mont-Saint-Hilaire	18,200	15,720	15.8
Mount Royal	19,503	18,933	3.0
Notre-Dame-de-l'Île-Perrot	10,620	9,885	7.4
Oka	3,969	3,300	20.3
Otterburn Park	8,450	8,464	-0.2
Pincourt	14,305	11,197	27.8
Pointe-Calumet	6,396	6,574	-2.7
Pointe-Claire	30,790	30,161	2.1
Pointe-des-Cascades	1,340	1,046	28.1
Repentigny	82,000	76,237	7.6
Richelieu	5,467	5,208	5.0
Rosemère	14,294	14,173	0.9
Saint-Amable	10,870	8,398	29.4
Saint-Basile-le-Grand	16,736	15,605	7.2
Saint-Bruno-de-Montarville	26,107	24,388	7.0
Saint-Constant	24,980	23,957	4.3
Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue	5,073	5,197	-2.4
Sainte-Anne-des-Plaines	14,535	13,001	11.8
Sainte-Catherine	16,762	16,211	3.4
Sainte-Julie	30,104	29,079	3.5
Sainte-Marthe-sur-le-Lac	15,689	11,311	38.7
Sainte-Thérèse	26,025	25,224	3.2
Saint-Eustache	44,154	42,077	4.9
Saint-Isidore	2,581		
Saint-Jean-Baptiste	3,191		
Saint-Joseph-du-Lac	6,195	4,958	24.9
Saint-Lambert	21,555	21,599	-0.2
Saint-Lazare	19,295	17,016	13.4
Saint-Mathias-sur-Richelieu	4,618	4,506	2.5
Saint-Mathieu	1,879	1,894	-0.8
Saint-Mathieu-de-Beloeil	2,624	2,288	14.7
Saint-Philippe	5,495	5,121	7.3

Saint-Sulpice	3,273	3,332	-1.8
Senneville	920	962	-4.4
Terrasse-Vaudreuil	1,971	1,985	-0.7
Terrebonne	106,322	94,703	12.3
Varenes	20,994	20,950	0.2
Vaudreuil-Dorion	33,305	25,789	29.1
Vaudreuil-sur-le-Lac	1,359	1,290	5.3
Verchères	5,692	5,243	8.6
Westmount	19,931	20,494	-2.7

ⁱ E.O. Wilson quotes, http://www.azquotes.com/author/15771-E_O_Wilson

ⁱⁱ An Inconvenient Truth: the Planetary Emergency f Global Warmingand What We Can Do About it, Al Gore, p.17

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/as-sa/fogs-spg/Facts-cma-eng.cfm?LANG=Eng&GK=CMA&GC=462>