



Hon. UJJAL DOSANJH, P.C., Q.C., M.P.
VANCOUVER SOUTH

19 May 2009

The Hon. Peter Van Loan, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Public Safety

The Hon. Stockwell Day, P.C., M.P.
Minister of International Trade

Honourable Colleagues:

Especially during an economic downturn, our government must take every action possible to solicit increased trade, investment, and tourism from our international partners. Canada has no closer partner than the United States of America, and British Columbia has no closer partner than the American Pacific Northwest.

As you are aware, Amtrak wishes to double its *Cascades* passenger rail service to Vancouver, effective as early as June 1st, 2009 - a rail service which already provides a substantial link between the Pacific Northwest and British Columbia that has been a tremendous boon to tourism in Vancouver and across our province.

A single Amtrak train each day has created hundreds, if not thousands, of BC jobs, and generated over \$20 million of tourist investment in our province each year since the service was initiated in 1994. According to a study by the Border Policy Research Institute at Western Washington University, the proposed second train to and from Vancouver each day would generate \$1.87 million in additional GST, PST, and hotel tax revenues collected. As many in Vancouver's tourism industry have attested, the economic impact of a second train would be even greater than the existing daily service because its timing would create a much greater number of overnight stays.

It seems however that the obstacle to the initiation of this increased service is a CBSA fee that would be assessed to Amtrak for this service, totaling nearly \$500,000 yearly. To allow between \$16 million and \$33 million in tourist spending and over 35,000 new yearly visitors to Vancouver slip away to maintain this small fee would strike me as completely unnecessary and ill-advised.

I strongly urge the Government of Canada to eliminate this fee and not stand in the way of trainloads full of much-needed tourist dollars and new high-paying Vancouver jobs.

Thank you for your consideration,

The Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh, P.C., Q.C.
Member of Parliament for Vancouver South