



The Honourable Amarjeet Sohi, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6  
[Amarjeet.Sohi@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Amarjeet.Sohi@parl.gc.ca)

March 26, 2018

Dear Minister Sohi,

**Re: Opening the Jacques Cartier Bridge to cyclists year-round**

The Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE) is a non-profit organization working in health and the environment. All of our mandates and actions are aimed at improving the physical, psychological, social and environmental health of Canadians.

It is with this in mind that we have been very involved in the promotion of active transportation. As we know, making a modal shift to active transportation is a great way to fight global warming, combat pollution problems in our cities and dramatically improve the health of the population. Currently, global warming is the number one public health problem on the planet, and in our cities, motorized transport is the main emitter of greenhouse gases. This is why the World Health Organization believes that the vehicles are one of the most important factors in the deterioration of the overall health status of the population.

The Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE) is actively working to promote active transportation at national, provincial, regional and municipal levels. We firmly believe that everything must be done to promote active transportation. With this in mind, facilitating the use of the bike 12 months a year is an absolute necessity. A large number of Canadian cities recognize this and have implemented winter bike trail opening and maintenance programs. This is the case for the city of Montreal.

If we want citizens to think of cycling as a more enjoyable, safe and efficient mode of transportation than driving, then people must be able to get to their daily activities by bike, whether they come from the city itself or the periphery. They must therefore be able to cycle across bridges without issue. But instead, this continues to be an issue for cyclists in Montreal.

For a long time now, several groups have asked the Jacques Cartier Bridge administration to collaborate so that the bridge can be opened to cyclists in winter. This has unfortunately not been successful so far and the senior administration of the bridge is visibly very cautious about this project. One of the issues includes safety concerns, for which it is obvious that we can find technical solutions. Unfortunately, there is a flagrant

lack of vision on the part of management. Very recently, things have changed a little: The Jacques Cartier and Champlain Bridges Administration (SPJCCB) has created an advisory committee on the subject and has begun holding meetings with all interested groups.

Unfortunately again, an evident lack of planning made it impossible to open the Jacques Cartier Bridge this winter. The list of problems is long:

1. Poor work planning that caused the cycling path to close during peak hours.
2. Delay in guardrail planning to protect cyclists, and extreme slowness in completing work due to lack of equipment.
3. Very late to implement the study of heating mats for the track (the idea was launched more than a year ago).
4. Laxity in the implementation of snow removal methods to be tested: It has not been cleared regularly, which makes the track absolutely unusable as soon as there is significant accumulation.
5. The comment of the Director of Operations that says that as soon as there is a possibility of freezing, the track will be closed (are you closing the sidewalks in April and October?).
6. Some of the arguments conveyed by the SPJCCB are simply wrong: ice falls and the presence of 'black ice'. Cyclists have never witnessed these phenomena!
7. Finally, as of March 26th, we are witnessing the non-opening of the track for one month now, while it is quite usable.

Due to the above reasons, we demonstrated last Saturday on the Jacques Cartier bridge so that the population knows our exasperation with the slow pace of work. All these errors give the impression that unfortunately here, the cyclist still remains less important than the motorist, whereas in many countries, the opposite has been true for decades.

We ask you, Minister Sohi, to intervene with the management of the Jacques Cartier and Champlain Bridges in order to instill in them the political will that is still lacking so that the bridge can finally be opened next winter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Eric Notebaert", is written on a light-colored rectangular background.

Dr. Eric Notebaert MD MSc VP

Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment

cc:

The Honourable Catherine McKenna, Minister of the Environment and Climate Change

The Honourable Marc Garneau, Minister of Transport