



Feb 8, 2026

To Whom It May Concern,

Alto, a Crown Corporation and the Project and Contracting Authority leading the development, implementation, and oversight of a new High Speed Rail project, recently disclosed a potential Southern route from Ottawa to Peterborough (with no stops in between), stating that this route may simplify construction while acknowledging increased impacts due to higher population densities in resort and agricultural areas.

The Sydenham Lake Association does not support the proposed Southern route. The proposed route cuts through the core of the UNESCO Frontenac Arch Biosphere and covers Sydenham Lake entirely. The Frontenac Arch Biosphere was established in 2002 and is recognized as one of the most significant migratory crossroads and wildlife corridors in eastern North America. Sydenham Lake is the reservoir for the municipal water system and is a Source Water Protection Area subject to the [Cataraqui Source Protection Plan \(2014\)](#).

The Sydenham Lake Association is a not-for-profit recreational organization whose mission is to *“enhance the enjoyment of Sydenham, Bull’s Eye, and Little Long Lakes, now and for future generations”*. The [Sydenham Lake - State of the Lake report \(2017\)](#) details the natural, social, physical, and economic values of the lake. The lake is central to the way of life for the community at large. It is a gathering area in both summer and winter. Residents enjoy summer camps, swimming lessons, fishing derbies, boating, football games, tennis courts, ball diamonds, ice-fishing, and snowmobiling. Community volunteers maintain a skating rink on the lake. The Sydenham Lake Canoe Club is located beside the Cataraqui trail. The Cataraqui Trail is used by runners, walkers, birders, cyclists, skiers, and snowmobilers, both locally and for those traveling long distances. Numerous social events are scheduled at the Sydenham point every year including: The Lakes and Trails festival, Touch the Truck, Snow Social, Summer Kickoff Music Festival, and Canada Day events.

Sydenham Lake is also home to an abundance of fish and wildlife species including numerous species at risk (e.g., snapping turtle, Blanding’s turtle, eastern musk turtle, whip-poor-will, nighthawk, barn swallow, monarch, and grey rat snake). Eagles, osprey, and terns can be seen diving for fish. Loons and ducks abound. Beavers, otters, fox, deer, weasels, coyotes, bobcats are regularly observed. Peepers loudly proclaim the start of spring. Catfish, pike and bass keep the fishermen and women busy.

While we acknowledge that there may be a need for transportation improvements, the current plan does not make sense from an environmental, social, or economic point of view locally or nationally. The proposed Southern corridor would not be accessible to local residents and would provide no local benefits and yet it would destroy our community, bisect the Frontenac Arch Biosphere, risk the village water supply and ruin our way of life on the lake. There has been limited effort on the part of Alto to consult with our community. Based on the information we have at this time we strongly oppose the proposed Southern option and recommend the route as well as the number and location of stops are revisited.

Sincerely,

Sydenham Lake Association Board

*CC: The Honourable Steven MacKinnon, Minister of Transport; The Honourable Mark Carney, Prime Minister of Canada; MP Mark Gerretsen; MP Scott Reid; The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario; MPP John Jordan; Martin Imbleau, President of Alto; Mayor Bryan Paterson, City of Kingston; Mayor Ron Vandewal, South Frontenac*