# OUTRUNNING THE STORM

## National Project: Canadian Passenger Rail Expansion

*Land Ferry Networks, Night Trains & Auto-Carrying Services*

LSCM Inc. | Dougald Lamont | May 26, 2026

*Source: Section 3.2 of the report. At $150/bbl: regional DMU networks reach commercial viability; Rogers Pass auto-train becomes irresistible. At $200/bbl: absence of national rail is a national economic emergency.*

## CORE ECONOMICS

Canada has ~40,000 km of freight rail network — much of it on corridors where passenger service was abandoned in the 1980s–90s. The infrastructure skeleton exists. Capital cost of passenger rail on existing freight corridors: $2–8M per km for upgrades, versus $20–80M per km for new highway.

| Mode | $70/bbl baseline | $90/bbl | $150/bbl | $200/bbl |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fuel cost, Calgary–Vancouver (family SUV) | ~$180 | ~$240 | ~$400 | ~$530 |
| Economy airfare, Toronto–Montreal (avg) | ~$180 | ~$220 | ~$380 | ~$500 |
| Trucking cost per km (tonne) | ~$0.18 | ~$0.23 | ~$0.38 | ~$0.50 |
| Via Rail ticket, Toronto–Montreal | ~$100–$150 | ~$105–$158 | ~$115–$175 | ~$125–$190 |

## PROVINCIAL SCENARIOS & PRIORITY ROUTES

| Province | Priority Routes | Cost Estimate | Timeline |
|---|---|---|---|
| British Columbia | Vancouver–Kamloops–Prince George; Rogers Pass auto-train | ~$1.4B–2.5B | 2026 35+ |
| Alberta | Calgary–Edmonton (2hr); Edmonton–Fort McMurray hydrogen train | ~$1.5B–2.7B | 2026 35+ |
| Saskatchewan | Saskatoon–Regina DMU; Prairie Milk Run rural service | ~$545M–1.1B | 2027 35+ |
| Manitoba | Churchill line full rehabilitation (URGENT); Winnipeg commuter rail | ~$2.1B–3.6B | 2025 37 |
| Ontario | HFR (Toronto–Ottawa–Montreal); Toronto–Windsor electrification; Ontario Northland | ~$17B–24B | 2026 40+ |
| Quebec | HFR share; Montreal–Quebec City; night trains | ~$6.5B–9.5B | 2026 40+ |
| Maritime Provinces | Maritime Connector (Moncton–Halifax–Truro); PEI high-speed ferry link | ~$2.3B–4.4B | 2028 38+ |

| Province | Priority Routes | Cost Estimate | Timeline |
|---|---|---|---|
| NL, North, Remote | Labrador Tran-Continental link; Churchill connection | ~$5.8B–13.7B | 2030 50+ |

# NATIONAL COST SUMMARY

| Program Element | Phase 1 (2025–28) | Phase 2 (2028–33) | Phase 3 (2033–40) | Phase 4 (2040–50) | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ontario HFR (federal share) | $3–4B | $4–6B | $2–3B | — | $9–13B |
| Quebec (HFR + corridors) | $1.5–2B | $2–3B | $2–3B | $1–1.5B | $6.5–9.5B |
| British Columbia | $0.3–0.5B | $0.6–1B | $0.5–1B | $0.3–0.5B | $1.7–3B |
| Alberta | $0.5–1B | $0.8–1.5B | $0.5–1B | $0.2–0.5B | $2–4B |
| Saskatchewan | $0.1–0.2B | $0.3–0.5B | $0.2–0.4B | $0.1–0.2B | $0.7–1.3B |
| Manitoba (incl. Churchill) | $1.5–2B | $0.5–1B | $0.5–0.8B | $0.2–0.3B | $2.7–4.1B |
| Maritime provinces | $0.2–0.4B | $0.8–1.5B | $0.8–1.5B | $0.5–1B | $2.3–4.4B |
| NL, North, Remote | $0.1–0.2B | $0.2–0.5B | $0.5–1B | $5–12B | $5.8–13.7B |
| Rolling stock (DMU/FCMU fleet) | $1–1.5B | $2–3B | $1.5–2.5B | $1–2B | $5.5–9B |
| Night train fleet (sleeper cars) | $0.3–0.5B | $0.5–0.8B | $0.5–0.8B | $0.2–0.4B | $1.5–2.5B |
| Auto-train infrastructure | $0.1–0.2B | $0.2–0.4B | $0.1–0.2B | $0.1–0.2B | $0.5–1B |
| TOTAL | $8.6–12.5B | $12–19.2B | $9.1–15.2B | $8.6–18.6B | $38–65.5B |

# THE CRASH PROGRAMME

*The 25-year timeline is internally contradictory if $150–200/bbl constitutes a national emergency. Every year of delay costs more than the acceleration premium. An 8-year substantially-complete network costs $55–95B — roughly 50–60% more in capital, but recovers that premium within 2–3 years of avoided household fuel costs at $150 oil.*

| Year | Programme Milestones |
|---|---|
| 2026 | Emergency declaration; procurement launch; Churchill line rehabilitation contracts; DMU procurement for top-priority corridors |
| 2027 | First new services: Calgary–Edmonton limited service; Winnipeg commuter corridor 1; Rogers Pass auto-train feasibility complete |
| 2027–2029 | Network expansion: Ontario Northland restored; Saskatoon–Regina launched; BC Kamloops corridor opens; HFR construction begins |
| 2029–2031 | Major infrastructure: HFR Phase 1 (Toronto–Ottawa); Toronto–Windsor electrification; Alberta Fort McMurray hydrogen train |
| 2031–2034 | Network maturity: Maritime Connector opens; BC–Prince George service; HFR full service; night trains on 4 corridors |

# FEDERAL POLICY ARCHITECTURE REQUIRED

- Establish a Via Rail successor agency with an expanded mandate, capital budget, and operating freedom analogous to VIA 2.0.
- Create a National Rail Infrastructure Fund ($40–65B over 25 years) with annual capital allocation not subject to annual appropriation cycles.
- Negotiate access rights on CN/CP/CPKC freight corridors — the foundational legal and commercial requirement for all inter-city passenger services.
- Mandate Canadian content in rolling stock manufacturing — National Steel Car, Alstom Bombardier, Hitachi (Thunder Bay) as priority suppliers.
- Coordinate with provinces on land use around stations to capture value uplift and fund operating costs.
- Establish regulatory fast-tracks for rail corridor environmental assessments analogous to the Crown Projects of WWII.
- Authorise Bank of Canada direct financing for national rail infrastructure as a wartime precedent application.

*Source: Section 3.2, Outrunning the Storm. May 26, 2026. Full provincial scenarios, technology options, auto-train analysis, critical minerals corridors, and industrial retooling details in source document.*