

STOP ALTO

HIGH-SPEED RAIL

A Message From

JAMIE SCHMALE
Your Member of Parliament for
Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes



/MPJamieSchmale



www.jamieschmale.ca



jamie.schmale@parl.gc.ca



@jamieschmale



@Jamie_Schmale

Dear Neighbour,

The federal government is pushing ahead with ALTO, a proposed high-speed rail line from Montréal to Toronto via Ottawa. ALTO plans to pass directly through the south end of our community without stopping. Before it moves a single passenger, it will require the expropriation of thousands of properties along its route across provinces, including farms, homes, and businesses in our community and neighbouring areas.

Before going any further, **I want to make one thing very clear: the proposed ALTO project is NOT the same as the Shining Waters Railway initiative that I have supported in every election since 2015 and continue to support today. The Shining Waters project, originally proposed by Dean Del Mastro (Former Member of Parliament for Peterborough), has been under development for more than a decade, with tens of millions of dollars invested in studies examining how to repair, replace, or twin existing rail infrastructure so that freight and passenger rail can operate more efficiently together.** Unlike ALTO, it focuses on improving and expanding existing rail corridors rather than building an entirely new high-speed network through rural communities.

I am writing because I believe you deserve to see the financial case for ALTO assessed honestly. We have reviewed independent research, the government's own projections, and testimony from ALTO's CEO before a parliamentary committee. What I found is deeply troubling. This is not about opposing transportation investment in principle. It is about ensuring taxpayer dollars are spent responsibly. Unfortunately, ALTO's numbers simply do not add up.

Canada's taxpayers, you and your neighbours, are being asked to fund a project whose costs remain highly uncertain, whose revenue projections appear implausible, and whose benefits will flow almost entirely to major urban centres far from our riding.

ALTO's own estimate puts construction costs between \$60 billion and \$90 billion. A \$30 billion gap between estimates is the first of many red flags. Independent researchers who examined twenty comparable projects around the world estimate the true cost could reach \$142 billion, with some projections as high as \$264 billion.

ALTO's own CEO admitted before a House of Commons committee in February 2026 that he could not yet provide a reliable budget estimate because "sufficient work has not been done." Yet expropriations may begin before a final cost estimate even exists.

Even under the most generous assumptions, using ALTO's projected ridership of 24 million passengers annually, the debt incurred to build the project would not be repaid until 2093. At more realistic cost estimates, annual interest payments alone could exceed the project's anticipated revenues and economic benefits. Your family's share of the bill, paid through taxes and beginning long before construction is complete, could range from **\$6,000 to \$26,000**.

I am asking you to review the information in this mailer, examine the research for yourself, and decide whether this project makes sense. If you agree that ALTO should be cancelled, I encourage you to sign House of Commons e-Petition e-7458 and/or let me know where you stand.

Our properties, our community, and our country's finances are on the line. We will bear the costs of expropriations, construction disruptions, and mounting debt, while receiving little to none of the promised benefits.

Please sign House of Commons **e-Petition e-7458** using the QR code on this mailer or by visiting my website. You can also complete the reply card on the reverse side and return it to my office. No postage is required when mailing correspondence to a Member of Parliament.

I, along with my colleagues in the Official Opposition, intend to fight this project, and I hope you'll stand with us.

Sincerely,

Jamie Schmale
Member of Parliament
Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes

Sign the e-Petition!



Why ALTO Is Wrong For Canada

Sign the e-Petition!



Tremendous & Uncertain Cost

ALTO's official estimate puts ALTO's price tag at \$60–\$90 billion. But independent researcher Andrew Hyett, studying 20 comparable high-speed rail projects across 9 countries, places the likely estimate at \$142 billion, with a 95% confidence interval of \$76–\$264 billion. At \$142 billion, your family's share of the construction cost works out to roughly \$14,000, paid in taxes before a single train moves. **ALTO's cost wildly exceeds its benefit for almost every Canadian.**

Debt Service Charges

ALTO would generate at least \$2.25 billion per year in interest charges, even before a single operating expense, at even the optimistic \$60 billion cost, financed at Canada's current 20-year bond rate of 3.75%. At the cost of \$142 billion, the annual interest charges exceed ALTO's ability to offer competitive pricing and generate sufficient revenue. ALTO never generates an operating surplus, it is subsidized every year, and the debt is never repaid. **Under the most generous possible assumptions (24 million riders, \$150 average fare), the debt would not be paid off until the year 2093.**

Wildly Optimistic Projections

Reaching ALTO's ridership estimates would require it to attract every single current traveller in that corridor, plus 38 percent more. ALTO projects 24 million passengers per year. Today, the total number of trips made along the entire Montréal–Ottawa–Toronto corridor by every mode of transport combined (air, rail, and road) is just 17.8 million. Independent researcher David Waugh: "Something is really broken in the ALTO math." **McGill University's Transportation Research Centre found the maximum realistic average fare is \$121, which is less than half what ALTO's projections require to service the project's debt.**

Huge Cost & Time Overruns

Every major high-speed rail project in history has exceeded its cost estimates, usually by a large margin; this is according to Bent Flyvbjerg, an Oxford professor who studies megaprojects. Rail projects carry an average cost overrun of 44%, with projected ridership shortfalls averaging 51%. A 2018 audit of EU-funded high-speed rail showed cost overruns of 78%, with more than half the projects suffering construction delays of more than a decade. There is no reason to believe ALTO can avoid these effects. **ALTO will cost substantially more than planned, and will take much longer to complete than anticipated.**

Land Expropriations & Destruction of Land Value

Building ALTO requires the expropriation of thousands of properties along the corridor: Farms, homes, and businesses in our community, and in others like ours. The government has given ALTO special powers that bypass normal legal protections, leaving landowners with limited right of appeal. Compensation is likely to fall below fair market value. Expropriations will begin before the full construction cost is even known. Even before a single expropriation notice arrives, the uncertainty surrounding ALTO's corridor is already suppressing property values for landowners. Farms are harder to sell. Homes are harder to finance. Businesses cannot plan for the future. ALTO's new powers allow it to prohibit work or improvements, for years at a time, on any piece of land it might, one day, decide to expropriate. **This damage is happening right now before any construction begins, and it falls entirely on families in our riding who had no say in the decision.**

Community & Road Disruptions

Construction of a 1,000 km rail corridor will mean years of disruption across our communities: Road closures, altered farm access, heavy equipment noise and vibration. The construction phase alone will span a decade, likely more. **Rural communities like those in the southern end of our riding will absorb the full brunt of this disruption while receiving no passenger rail service and no economic benefit in return.**

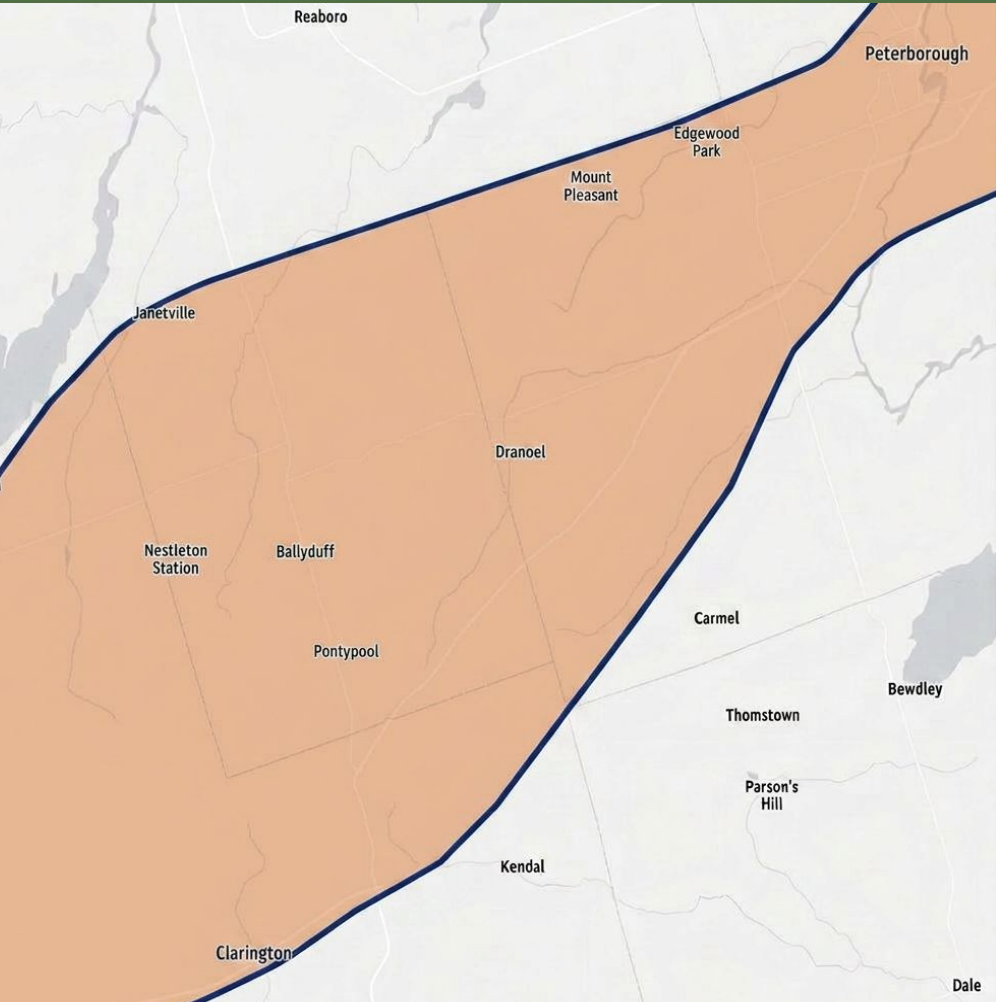
No Lasting Local Benefits

If it is built, ALTO will bypass our communities. High-speed trains are engineered to travel between major urban centres at 300 km/h. They do not stop in small towns. Communities in our riding will gain no station, no service, and no jobs from ALTO's operations. The winners are downtown Toronto, Ottawa, and Montréal. **Rural people and small-town communities who give up their land and pay the taxes will objectively receive nothing in return.**

Land First, Plan Later

In order to meet its unrealistic plans, ALTO will need to expropriate land and begin construction before the true, full cost of the project can be known. Our neighbours could lose their properties to a project that has no verified price tag, and no credible business case. **ALTO will not accomplish any of its stated goals, and should be cancelled.**

THROUGH OUR COMMUNITIES. OPPOSED BY OUR COMMUNITIES.



The proposed ALTO corridors pass directly through the southern end of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes. Properties in the orange-shaded zones (the proposed southern ALTO corridor) face potential expropriation. Many landowners have already received letters from ALTO surveyors requesting access to their land. ALTO can impose a work-freeze on improvements to any piece of land in these corridors, and give itself a right of first refusal on the sale of any property in the corridor, affecting the land values, business operations, and quality of life of anyone who owns, uses, or lives on those properties.

These negative effects, and the long-term uncertainty this project will cause, will be less and less reversible the longer ALTO continues.

Municipal councils across our riding have adopted a resolution against ALTO. Most elected members at the federal and provincial level are opposed to ALTO. Many community and conservation organizations are opposed to ALTO. Rarely have I encountered an issue on which so many of my constituents, from different walks of life, and so many governmental and non-governmental organizations, of all types, have agreed that this is bad for our community.

The cost of ALTO will damage Canada. The cost to our communities will damage livelihoods, property, and ecosystems.

CUT ALONG THIS LINE

Share Your Thoughts

Do you agree that the ALTO High-Speed Rail project is the wrong investment for our area, and for Canada?

☐ I AGREE: STOP ALTO ☐ I DISAGREE ☐ UNSURE

COMMENTS: _____

Have you already signed, or do you intend to sign, the new e-petition against ALTO (e-7458)?

(Use the QR Code [QR](https://www.ourcommons.ca/petitions) go to www.ourcommons.ca/petitions)

☐ YES ☐ TELL ME MORE ☐ NO

Rate my performance as your Member of Parliament:

☐ RIGHT TRACK ☐ WRONG TRACK ☐ UNSURE

COMMENTS: _____

NAME: _____ POST CODE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TOWN: _____ PHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

CUT ALONG THIS LINE

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ALTO: NO BUSINESS CASE.

**\$60B-\$90B
BORROWED
FROM ALL OF US**

ABSURD NUMBERS. ZERO JUSTIFICATION.

PROJECTED BENEFITS DON'T COVER THE COST \$60B-\$90B (ESTIMATED COST) VS. \$15B-\$49B (ESTIMATED BENEFITS)	MASSIVE ANNUAL SUBSIDIES \$1.28 BILLION EVERY YEAR NOT SELF-SUSTAINING UNTIL YEAR 44
WON'T BREAK EVEN FOR 44 YEARS 44 NOT SELF-SUSTAINING UNTIL YEAR 44	SAVES JUST 19 MINUTES ON THE MONTREAL-OTTAWA TRIP

**TENS OF BILLIONS SPENT.
ZERO BUSINESS CASE.**

SEND A MESSAGE TO ALTO

WHAT YOU CAN DO

The most effective way to stop ALTO is to show the government that you understand the financial case, and reject it. Every action below counts.

- **Sign the new e-Petition (e-7458)** — visit www.ourcommons.ca/petitions or scan the QR code included on this mailer. Each e-petition signature is a formal message to Parliament.
- **Return this survey to my office** — fold and tape. No postage required.
- **Talk to your friends and neighbours.** The more people who understand the numbers, the stronger our voice.
- **Contact my office directly** if your property is in or near the corridor. I want to hear your situation personally.

CUT ALONG THIS LINE



JAMIE SCHMALE
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
HOUSE OF COMMONS
OTTAWA ON K1A 0A6

FOLD ALONG THIS LINE

CUT ALONG THIS LINE

CUT ALONG THIS LINE

TAPE

THE NUMBERS THAT MATTER

These are the facts everyone should know:

- \$60–\$264 billion: The range of credible construction cost (central: \$142 billion).
- \$6,000–\$26,000: Your family's tax share of the construction costs before a train moves.
- Year 2093: When the debt is repaid under best-case assumptions.
- 17.8 million: Total corridor trips per year today (all modes of travel—air, rail, car).
- 24 million: ALTO's projected passengers per year (138% of the corridor's entire current traffic).
- \$0: Local passenger service benefit.

LOCAL RESEARCH

- A large amount of the citizen-led research and analysis that I have cited can be viewed by searching for "**Alto HSR Citizen Research**". Give it a visit.

Other referenced sources:

- McGill Transportation Research Centre.
- Andrew Hyett / ALTO HSR Citizen Research Initiative (April 2026).
- Bent Flyvbjerg, 2014, "What You Should Know about Megaprojects and Why: An Overview," Project Management Journal, vol. 45, no. 2, April-May, pp. 6-19, DOI: 10.1002/pmj.21409
- Martin Imbleau, ALTO CEO, testimony to House of Commons Finance Committee (Feb. 2, 2026);.
- David Waugh, independent researcher.

Sign the e-Petition!



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