

Speaking notes

Ottawa, April 25, 2014

STEVE DEL BOSCO, INTERIM PRESIDENT & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
MARC BEAULIEU, CHIEF OF TRANSPORT AND REGIONAL GENERAL MANAGER, EASTERN CANADA
OTTAWA CITY COUNCIL
CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Steve Del Bosco

M. le Maire Watson, chers conseillers, au nom de VIA Rail, il me fait plaisir d'être ici aujourd'hui pour partager avec vous la plus récente information sur les situations liées aux passages à niveau dans le secteur de Barrhaven et d'élaborer sur les actions prises à ce jour.

As you know, where matters of transportation and safety are concerned, it is always critical to ensure all those involved, and all those who touch an issue, are well informed and armed with facts. We acknowledge the right of citizens to know. Before communicating with citizens on the root cause of the issues, we have to make sure to have all the facts.

That is why at the outset of the situations at the the Barrhaven-area rail crossings , VIA Rail retained experts at RailTerm and engineers from Hatch Mott MacDonald and Siemens to undertake a comprehensive investigation of the situations, its infrastructure, and signaling system.

Today we will provide to you a briefing on the preliminary findings related to that investigation and will share with you an overview of:

- the situations that occurred at the Barrhaven-area rail crossings;
- the probable causes of each situation; and,
- the measures taken to rectify these situations.

On April 30th, as promised, we will receive the final report related to the investigation which will:

- validate the preliminary assumptions about the root causes;
- summarize the actions taken to rectify the situations; and,
- highlight any possible further recommendations to help mitigate fail-safe occurrences in the future.

As you are important conduits to the people who live and work in the community in which we operate – and those who have been touched by this issue -- we need to ensure you have the facts so that you can properly inform your constituents.

The recent issues with our Automatic Warning Devices (AWDs) at six Barrhaven-area rail crossings have resulted in delays in both motor and pedestrian traffic -- a major inconvenience to the community. But more importantly, the frequency of these occurrences has justifiably raised concerns amongst residents and frequent travelers in the area, about the reliability of our AWD systems.

All of us at VIA Rail are keenly aware that many members of the public – and possibly some of you -- are not happy about the situation. And rightly so. Neither are we. We share your dissatisfaction and we apologize for any inconvenience and concerns it may be causing.

It is very important you know that while we recognize that it has been inconvenient and that the public's concerns are understandable, at no time has public safety been at risk as a result of these occurrences. To be clear, putting the public at risk is not something I would ever tolerate, nor would anyone at VIA Rail Canada.

À VIA Rail, prendre soin des citoyens figure parmi nos priorités. Nous voulons nous assurer d'une paix d'esprit chez ceux touchés de près ou de loin par nos opérations. Chaque minute est consacrée à en minimiser les inconvénients pour le public et nous ne faisons aucun compromis lorsqu'il est question de sécurité.

We have been working hard to resolve these issues.

I can assure you that at no time have crossing signals or railway operating rules that protect citizens compromised public safety.

With that, I would now like to invite Marc Beaulieu, our Chief of Transport and Regional General Manager, Eastern Canada to brief you on the issues related to the Barrhaven-area rail crossings, including actions undertaken to date. Marc...

Marc Beaulieu

Thank you, Steve.

Comme vous savez, récemment, les mécanismes d'avertissement automatiques à six passages à niveau de VIA Rail situés dans le secteur de Barrhaven sont passés en mode sécurité intégrée à une plus grande fréquence et sur des périodes de temps plus longues que normalement.

This means the systems were activated, causing the gates to lower and lights and bells to turn on while no trains were in the vicinity of the crossings.

While gates lowering and lights and bells turning on are regular occurrences at all railway crossings, what is not normal is for such events to happen with such a high frequency and for longer periods of time than usual.

At the Barrhaven-area crossings some of the Automatic Warning Devices in this area are triggered into fail-safe mode more frequently than normal. So what does this mean? The mechanisms detect activities on the track, which triggers the activation of the signals.

But why is this happening? Well, the AWD systems are sensitive by design. Which is important. They are meant to ensure safety by triggering a fail-safe mode when any anomaly is detected on or around the track infrastructure or signal systems themselves. Fail-safe mode can be triggered by many different environmental, mechanical, electrical or operational circumstances.

Seeking answers, from the onset of this issue, as Steve mentioned, VIA Rail mandated reputable firms to investigate the situation. At our request, our supplier RailTerm, as well as expert engineers from Hatch Mott MacDonald and Siemens, are conducting a comprehensive investigation of our infrastructure and signaling system in the area. We will receive their final report on April 30.

This investigation is rigorous and therefore takes time to conduct thoroughly. While the engineering analysis continues, and since the onset of this issue, additional measures have been put into place at certain crossings in the Barrhaven area, including Woodroffe Avenue, the OC Transpo Transitway, Fallowfield Road, Greenbank Road, Jockvale Road and Strandherd Road. These measures include:

- The implementation of preliminary recommendations from these experts.
- On-site VIA Rail Personnel were deployed, providing supplementary support and maintenance to Automatic Warning Devices, and ensuring that motorists and pedestrians stop at each crossing.
- Although many components met all the required standards, many were changed as a preventative measure.
- Trains have been operating at reduced speed in the Barrhaven area. As a result, longer traffic stops and longer activation of automatic warning devices can continue to be expected. This also causes some train delays.
- VIA Rail asked the Ottawa Police to open an inquiry. While there have been trouble calls received about these locations, none have been proven to be due to tampering.

Fortunately, the frequency and length of delays for motorists and pedestrians have decreased significantly over the last two weeks.

However, we will continue to provide manual protection at the OC Transpo Transitway and Woodroffe Avenue crossings where the majority of the issues with our Automatic Warning Devices have occurred.

This means you will continue to see personnel at these crossings who will conduct traffic should there be any issues with the Automatic Warning Devices. We thank the public for their patience and understanding and we truly appreciate their cooperation in ensuring safety is maintained at all times.

And, as always, railway crossings should be approached with caution and signals must be obeyed, all the time, as the Automatic Warning Devices are in place to protect all of us.

RailTerm is our infrastructure contractor, responsible for maintenance and rail traffic control. VIA Rail has worked with them since 1999.

Steve Del Bosco

Again, we were pleased to be here with you today to share some of the information related to the issues with our Automatic Warning Devices (AWDs) at six Barrhaven-area rail crossings

We trust the information we have shared will help you to inform your constituents and will ensure we are on the same page.

In addition to this briefing, we have been, and remain dedicated to keeping the public informed of any material developments. This is paramount. We have established a dedicated web page for specific and additional information, and the public can follow developments on Twitter [@VIA_rail](#) and on [Facebook](#). We are continuously improving our communications, and we will continue to share important information with the public.

As we mentioned, the expert report will be tabled on April 30. We plan to host a technical briefing for media at which time the technical experts will present their findings and recommendations, if any.

I would like to close by saying how grateful I am to the dedicated teams at VIA Rail who have been working behind-the-scenes to put into place and carry-out the measures that continue to ensure the public's safety.

We recognize that the impact to road users is unacceptable. This is why we have worked on reducing the impact on them and on finding ways to improve the reliability of our crossings and reduce the impact of fail-safe occurrences.

As always, you have my promise we will continue to work to address the issues and we will remain dedicated to ensuring the public remains safe.

We look forward to the continued sharing of information with the public in the coming days.

We are ready to open the floor to questions.

Thank you.