

News Release *Communiqué*

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LEGISLATION INTRODUCED TO AUTHORIZE THE COMPLETION OF HIGHWAY 30

OTTAWA — Transport Minister Jean-C. Lapierre today announced that legislation to assist in the completion of Highway 30 in Quebec has been introduced in the Senate. Passage of this legislation will enable the Government of Canada to authorize the construction of bridges over the St. Lawrence River and the Beauharnois Canal.

“Completing Highway 30 is very important to the residents of the Greater Montreal Area and especially those living in the Montérégie and Suroît regions,” said Mr. Lapierre. “This legislation demonstrates the Government of Canada’s commitment to completing this important infrastructure project as quickly as possible.”

“This is yet another concrete step toward honoring our federal commitment to see Highway 30 become a reality by 2009, as scheduled,” said Jacques Saada, Minister for Canada Economic Development. “This is essential for the Montérégie and the Greater Montreal area.”

The completion of Highway 30 involves the construction of a new 42-km four-lane western segment between Châteauguay and Vaudreuil-Dorion, including a seven-kilometer highway connection. The western segment requires the construction of two major bridges, one across the St. Lawrence River and one over the Beauharnois Canal. The Government of Quebec will oversee the construction and will retain ownership of the additions, including the two bridges.

Under the *Navigable Waters Protection Act*, the Minister of Transport does not have the authority to approve the location of, or the plans for, a bridge across the St. Lawrence River or the Beauharnois Canal. A special act of Parliament is therefore necessary to authorize the construction of these two bridges.

Special acts of Parliament were also required to authorize the construction of other bridges across the St. Lawrence River, including the Pierre Laporte and Quebec bridges in Quebec City, the Laviolette bridge in Trois-Rivières, and the Boucherville Islands bridges. The bill introduced today is based on these special acts.

The legislation will:

- authorize the Government of Quebec to construct and maintain a bridge over the St. Lawrence River and a bridge over the Beauharnois Canal;
- authorize the Government of Quebec to build and maintain any ancillary works required during the construction or maintenance of these two bridges; and
- limit the project scope to the planned construction area.

The bill also gives the Government of Canada the right to review components of the Highway 30 project that could have an impact on navigation, shipping, or any other aspect under federal jurisdiction.

In May 2002, the Government of Canada committed \$150 million, through the Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund, to the construction of the western segment of Highway 30.

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The addition of this segment to Highway 30 will provide the Montreal region with a four-lane bypass by 2009. This bypass will help improve the movement of goods and people in the Greater Montreal region.

A backgrounder on the proposed legislation is attached.



Background

HIGHWAY 30 BRIDGES COMPLETION ACT

The completion of Highway 30 involves the construction of a new 42-km four-lane western segment between Châteauguay and Vaudreuil-Dorion, including a seven-kilometer highway connection. The western segment requires the construction of two major bridges, one across the St. Lawrence River and one over the Beauharnois Canal.

This construction however, cannot proceed without a special act of Parliament as:

- Section 5 of the *Navigable Waters Protection Act* states that no structure shall be built or placed in, on, over, under, through or across any navigable water unless the structure, site and plans have been approved by the Minister of Transport. This provision applies to the bridges required for the western segment; and
- Section 13 states that no approval of the site or plans for any bridge over the St. Lawrence River shall be given under this act. This condition also applies to the Beauharnois Canal, which is adjacent to the St. Lawrence River.

The proposed special act will authorize the Government of Quebec to construct and maintain the proposed bridges and will contain provisions that will require the provincial government to submit the plans, specifications and locations of the proposed bridges for study and approval by the governor-in-council before work begins. Provisions allowing the governor-in-council to make regulations with respect to the two proposed bridges and that relate to navigation will be included as well.

The proposed legislation would also require the Government of Quebec to submit any substantial changes to the location, plans, specifications, or to any ancillary works for the proposed bridges, for governor-in-council approval.

Special acts of Parliament were also required to authorize construction of other bridges across the St. Lawrence, including the Pierre Laporte and Quebec bridges in Quebec City, the Laviolette bridge in Trois-Rivières, and the Boucherville Islands bridges. The proposed special act is based on previously adopted legislation.

An environmental assessment under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* is currently under way to identify possible environmental impacts, suggest mitigation measures and anticipate any significant negative environmental effects that could result despite adherence to the suggested mitigation measures. Based on the results of the environmental assessment, the responsible government departments will remove their obligations and allow all or only certain parts of the construction to proceed.

The Government of Quebec will oversee the project and will retain responsibility for the new segment, including the proposed bridges over the St. Lawrence River and the Beauharnois Canal.

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