



## News Release For Immediate Release

### **15 YEARS AFTER THE LAST E&N COMMUTER TRAIN, FORT-VI SAYS IT IS TIME TO THINK DIFFERENTLY**

VICTORIA, BC March 19, 2026 - 15 years ago, the last VIA train left the station, leaving the 289 km long Island Rail Corridor (IRC) largely unused and deteriorating. Since then, too much time and too much public money have been wasted attempting to bring back rail service on this obsolete and inadequate rail line.

“Friends of Rails to Trails – Vancouver Island (FORT-VI) believes the time has come to re-imagine the Island Rail Corridor and create the E&N Rail Trail, a world-class active transportation network with the potential to attract hundreds of thousands of tourists and inject tens of millions of dollars annually into the Vancouver Island economy,” said Alastair Craighead, President, FORT-VI. “A connected E&N Rail Trail will help Island communities be more resilient, fuel small businesses and create and sustain local industries and jobs.”

Additionally, the Government of BC’s recently announced Tourism Sector Action Plan, a dynamic and aggressive vision to invest and grow the BC tourism sector, keenly notes the role tourism plays in community vitality. That announcement is a timely reminder that BC has a valuable and unused tourism asset sitting within reach of many Vancouver Island communities. An E&N Rail Trail will preserve and make use of this valuable public asset while helping to put B.C. firmly on the world stage. An all ages and all abilities rail trail will position Vancouver Island and the province as premier destinations for visitors and investors alike.

“Since studies and reports have determined that restoring rail service would be ‘inefficient, unproductive, and very costly’, it is past time to build the E&N Rail Trail and boost economies with low-impact slow tourism,” remarked David Slade, Vice-President, FORT-VI. “This single project has the potential to bring many great benefits to all Island communities, including First Nations, by improving mental and physical health, reducing vehicle congestion and emissions, and increasing safety for people moving between communities.”

Studies on the benefits of active transportation and active lifestyles, as well as the recent growth of slow tourism, continue to demonstrate the tremendous economic values that come with well-designed multi-use trails. FORT-VI believes it is time to invest into the E&N Rail Trail and realize the potential it offers and stop throwing valuable tax dollars into the bottomless IRC money pit.

-30-

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