



**Chambre de commerce  
du Montréal métropolitain**  
**Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal**

October 24, 2005

Mr. Jean J. Charest  
Premier of Quebec  
Honoré-Mercier Building  
835 René-Lévesque Blvd. East, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor  
Quebec City, Quebec  
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Dear Mr. Premier:

The Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal places singular importance on the full and sound development of the metropolis, the economic engine of Quebec. It works to ensure that Montreal offers one of the best possible environments for conducting business and attracting talent. We believe the plan discussed in October during the Quebec-New York Economic Summit to build a high-speed rail link between Montreal and New York City could be a remarkable development lever not only for Montreal but also for the entire province.

For many years, Quebec's trade relationships centred primarily on the east-west axis – or neighbouring Canadian provinces – but it seems that trade with the Eastern United States is increasingly becoming a structuring element for the Montreal and Quebec economies. In 2003, it totaled more than \$27.4 billion, or fully half the Quebec government's total budget.

Knowing that this high-speed rail service could link downtown Montreal to downtown New York in less than four hours and that, with no less than 12 million inhabitants, New York City is the financial heart and one of the major cultural capitals of the world, there is no doubt this project would create a major asset increasing the competitiveness of Montreal and the province. For the Board of Trade, such a project, increasing the mobility of Quebecers within a population pool of more than 30 million people, should certainly be among those considered by the Quebec government.

Finally, for the first time in Quebec, the building of this high-speed rail link offers a unique opportunity to highlight and benefit from the know-how developed within Quebec companies specialized in the field of rail transit and whose trains already circulate in many metropolises around the world.

Please be assured of the full cooperation of the Board of Trade throughout the various steps leading to the accomplishment of this strategic project promoting the development of Quebec and its metropolis.

Yours very truly,

Isabelle Hudon  
President and CEO