



PRESS RELEASE

Friday, November 1st, 2019

Beaubassin East, Cap-Pelé and the provincial MLA meet with Minister Bill Oliver to discuss the closure of the Kouchibouguac River Bridge

The Mayors of the Beaubassin-est Rural Community and the Village of Cap-Pelé, Ronnie Duguay and Serge Léger, MLA for the riding of Shédiac-Beaubassin-Cap-Pelé, Jacques LeBlanc, and President of the Chamber of Commerce of Cap-Pelé / Beaubassin-est, Albert LeBlanc, met with the Hon. Bill Oliver, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure along with provincial officials to discuss the closure of the Kouchibouguac River No. 1 Bridge on Highway 133. The meeting was convened following requests from the 2 municipalities asking for an update on the closure. "The Minister reassured us that the department is currently doing the necessary studies on the existing condition of the bridge. He was very receptive to our concerns regarding the importance of the bridge from a tourism, economic development and public safety perspective, while mentioning the importance of this bridge for the people of the region", says the Mayor of Beaubassin-est, Ronnie Duguay.

The Minister and provincial engineers shared that regular follow-ups would be done to municipalities, but that an immediate solution to reopen the bridge on a partial basis would not be considered at this time. The mayors, the MLA and the President of the Chamber of Commerce ask residents to follow the posted signs directions and respect traffic circulation. "We understand that the existing detour is causing travel delays, but the public safety of our citizens is of primary importance. The existing structure is not yet considered safe in terms of road transport because the study is not yet completed", said the Mayor of Cap-Pelé, Serge Léger.

Due to previous commitment, the Minister shared his inability to attend the group's meeting scheduled for November 5 but shared that the department plans to provide answers to the questions asked in the correspondence sent to him on October 23, 2019, once the evaluation is completed. This letter was signed by the Mayors of the two municipalities, the President of the Chamber of Commerce of Cap-Pelé / Beaubassin-est and several entrepreneurs and community stakeholders. "The meeting scheduled for the moment would be premature. We have to give the department time to study", says Jacques LeBlanc, MLA for Shédiac-Beaubassin-Cap-Pelé. Several factors such as the environmental impact, the condition of the

existing structure, the cost of potential rehabilitation, and the potential application of Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements (DFAA) to the Government of Canada must be considered before a solution is presented by the provincial government.

In order to let the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure complete their studies, the meeting scheduled for November 5, 2019 will be postponed to a later date. The new date and the meeting place will be shared as soon as possible when a suitable room has been identified.

The bridge was closed to traffic on Friday, September 20, for an indefinite period. The closure is required due to the deterioration of the bridge that was discovered after an inspection following Hurricane Dorian. Detour signage have been put in place to redirect traffic to Highway 15. The Department of Transportation and Infrastructure reminds motorists to reduce speed, drive safely and to check NB511 for the most up-to-date information. For more information on the bridge closure, contact the regional office of the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure at 856-2000.

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