



Saint Mary's Cement aligned construction schedule to that of Transports Québec

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PORT DANIEL – Who is right? On one side, Transports Québec and the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie spokesperson affirm that the railway will not reopen to Port Daniel until the spring because Saint Mary's cement silo, required to load railcars, won't be ready until the second quarter of 2025. On the other side, Saint Mary's Cement replies in writing to the SPEC questions stating that the company aligned its schedule with Transports Québec's timeline. Here is the question-answer exchange between the newspaper and the cement producer. (Q: SPEC A: Saint Mary's Cement)

Q - Why was St Mary's call for tenders for the silo not issued earlier? What is your estimate of the delivery date?

A - We have aligned our timeline with the Ministry of Transportation's, given that construction of the silo, scale and associated equipment cannot start until the Ministry has completed its work, particularly on the onsite railyard. Our engineering work on the silo is underway, and we are awaiting bids for the equipment, and the silo's construction and installation. As part of our preparation work, we have also requested a permit from the MELCCFP (SPEC's note: Ministry of the Environment, Fight against Climate Change, Wildlife and Parks) for the installation of a new dust collector, which will be required for the silo. We are awaiting the Ministry's approval before the equipment can be put into operation.

Q - Does Saint Mary's Cement expect a higher volume of traffic by rail, given that railcars will now be loaded at the Port Daniel facility, and considering the transshipment cost associated with using trucks between Port Daniel and New Richmond and the load transfer to railcars?

A - St Mary's Cement distribution network leverages various combinations of trucks, ships and railways to minimize the environmental impacts associated with transporting cement. Although there might be a slight increase in the volume of cement transported by rail once the Caplan – Port-Daniel-Gascons leg of the railway is completed, our main objective is to reduce truck traffic from Port-Daniel-Gascons to New Richmond and its related impacts. We consistently look at all options to improve traffic flow and material efficiencies. As always, these evaluations will be ongoing in the future once the system is operational.

Q - How much will the silo cost?

A - This project is part of the 80 million dollar investment that St Mary's Cement is making to maintain and improve the productivity, efficiency and environmental footprint of the plant since assuming responsibility for its operations in 2021.

Q - Will it be made in the Gaspé Peninsula?

A - As the construction bid has not been awarded yet, we cannot say yet, but it's a factor. Our calls for tenders consider local, regional and First Nations companies.