

Transports Québec says new railroad bed will be safe in the New Carlisle-Paspebiac area, despite apparent cavity

● GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW CARLISLE – In December, Saint-Siméon-based photographer, video producer and drone pilot Allen Shaw captured images of the railroad upgrading works in the New Carlisle-Paspebiac area. He frequently shoots videos and photos of that operation.

He noticed a spot where there seemed to be an overhang, or a cavity, whose size is hard to assess from the air. Mr. Shaw shared the photo and some observers are of the view that it looks like a significant overhang.

The SPEC asked Transports Québec, the owner of the line, whether this overhang poses a safety concern. The reply came from the ministry's spokesperson, Sophie Gaudreault.

"I would like to remind you that because of the erosion of the cliff, the work carried out

in the New Carlisle sector, as part of the Gaspésie Railway rehabilitation project, required the relocation of the railway and the construction of retaining walls to protect it from coastal hazards. The rock face in the area was analyzed by the Ministry's geotechnical and rock mechanic experts. The latter has a complete portrait of the condition of the cliffs on the section between Caplan and Port-Daniel-Gascons, including a digital terrain model showing the characteristics of the cavities present in the cliff at New Carlisle, in particular the depth of the cavity versus the positioning of the track. These elements were taken into consideration during the design," replied Ms. Gaudreault. "Despite the presence of cavities, the experts confirm the solidity of the wall to support the new railway line, and that the new location takes into account the setbacks calculated for the



Photo: Douglas Allen Shaw

There seems to be an overhang along the cliff in the New Carlisle-Paspebiac area.

coming decades. As a result of this analysis, the Department does not plan to extend the riprap under the retaining wall to the east. Once the work is completed and the commissioning is completed, the trains

will be able to run safely. As with all of the Department's infrastructure, a maintenance, protection and monitoring program will be put in place to ensure the sustainability of the track," concludes Sophie Gau-

dreault.

The line is expected to reopen between New Carlisle and Port Daniel's cement plant at some point toward the end of the spring or the beginning of the summer.