

Federal candidates wade into CP complex debate

LES CÈDRES Candidates running in the Oct. 14 Vaudreuil-Soulanges federal election weighed in on the proposed Canadian Pacific Intermodal Complex last week.

Green Party candidate Jean-Yves Massenet fired off a barrage of questions on the impact of the 300-hectare industrial site, while Bloc incumbent Meili Faille said the project is a priority.

CP communications manager Michel Spénard said the CP have consulted with Faille regularly, and said they would contact Massenet about his concerns.

The road/rail transshipment complex, designed as an 'inland port' to process the flood of goods from Asia, is scheduled to begin operations in 2010 or 2011.

CP is currently awaiting a "scoping document" from the Canadian Transportation Agency in order to proceed with further environmental studies on the project.

Spénard said the scoping document is expected sometime this fall, a slight setback in CP's schedule.

In a three-page analysis, Massenet says the terminal has its benefits, but also raises a number of environmental concerns.

The document begins by stating the CP project is a positive and necessary step in the right direction from a global standpoint, noting the complex will take thousands of trucks off Canada's highways.

The document then changes gears, critiquing everything from noise, traffic and air pollution to the technical aspects of the project.

Bloc incumbent Meili Faille also critiqued the former Liberal government for their handling of a Railway Safety Act review in 2006, and her office distributed hundreds of flyers this summer to gauge how residents feel about the project.

"We must follow that project very closely. That's one project in which the quality of life of the citizens must be a priority," Faille said last week.

Conservative candidate and International Trade Minister Michael Fortier and Liberal candidate Brigitte Legault have both stated the project is best left to follow its course through the Canadian Transportation Agency.

Committee for the Protection of the Environment spokesperson Pierre Kary said he had spoken with Legault about the project, but both he and Green Coalition transport critic Avrom Shtern said calls concerning the project were not returned by Fortier's offices.

Massenet also raised concerns over the loss of the agricultural character of the riding, and said emphasis should be placed on diversifying the region's industries.