Government launches the Canadian Rail Research Laboratory

SOURCE: Transport Canada

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The Honourable Rona Ambrose, Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Minister for the Status of Women and Minister Responsible for Northern Alberta, on behalf of the Honourable Denis Lebel, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, today launched a new partnership that will support jobs and long-term success in the Canadian rail sector.

"The economy remains the Harper government's top priority and Canada's railway network is an integral part of our economy - transporting people and goods safely and efficiently across the country and to and from global markets." said Minister Ambrose. "This innovative facility at the University of Alberta will conduct specialized research and educate qualified engineers to meet the future needs of the Canadian rail sector."

"Our strategic investment will support new job opportunities and make it easier for researchers, industry and governments to work together to improve rail safety and efficiency," said Minister Lebel. "By developing technology and training the next generation of students for careers in rail, this partnership will help the Canadian rail sector remain well-equipped and competitive."

This new partnership, the Canadian Rail Research Laboratory, is a joint initiative between the Government of Canada, Alberta Innovates - Technology Futures (AITF), the Association of American Railroads (AAR), Canadian Pacific (CP), CN and the University of Alberta. It will conduct research specifically related to ground hazards and winter service reliability - issues that directly impact the safety and efficiency of Canada's rail network.

In order to enhance rail safety in Canada, research on ground hazards will examine landslides, rock falls, land subsidence, erosion, as well as snow and ice conditions.

Research related to winter service reliability will include studies of optimal materials, fuels and cold weather engineering, avalanche monitoring and control, response to service disruptions, and weather monitoring and predictions.

The Canadian Rail Research Laboratory will receive a total of more than $5 million over the next five years; $1,056,000 from Transport Canada; $1,000,000 from AITF; $500,000 from the AAR; $500,000 from CP; $500,000 from CN; and $1,500,000 from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC).

PARTICIPANTS OF THE CANADIAN RAIL RESEARCH LABORATORY

Alberta Innovates - Technology Futures (AITF)

Stephen Lougheed, President and CEO
"Supporting top research talent to solve challenges facing industries and businesses enhances Alberta's competitiveness in global markets. The rail industrial research chair will contribute to expanded market access and the sustainability of Alberta's export driven economy."

Association of American Railroads

Semih F. Kalay, Transportation Technology Center, Inc (TTCI) Senior Vice President Technology
"Transportation Technology Center, Inc congratulates the University of Alberta on the opening of the Canadian Rail Research Laboratory. The Association of American Railroads and TTCI are proud to be sponsors and participants in the new lab under the AAR Affiliated Laboratory program. We also congratulate Dr. Derek Martin upon his appointment as the NSERC Industrial Research Chair in Railway Geomechanics. We look forward to working with Dr. Martin."

Canadian Pacific

Mike Roney, General Manager Technical Standards Engineering Services
"Canadian Pacific is proud to join with railway partners in support of this innovative research lab which will also foster a new generation of bright young minds in our industry. The Canadian Rail Research Laboratory

will contribute to important research and development that will provide valuable insight into improvements that can be made to railway efficiency and reliability particularly for Canada's colder winter climate."

CN

Dwight Tays, Chief, Engineering Technology
"CN is very pleased to be a partner in this new initiative, we have a strong relationship with the University of Alberta in the area of ground hazards research and we view the opening of the Canadian Rail Research Laboratory as a natural extension of this relationship. It is our sincere hope that establishment of the CaRRL and the NSERC Research Chair at the University of Alberta will heighten the profile of the rail industry within the academic curriculum and create renewed interest in a career with CN for graduating engineering students. CN is committed to working with Dr. Martin in his new role as Research Chair to support and facilitate the success of the Railway Geomechanics initiative and the Canadian Rail Research Laboratory."

University of Alberta

Dr. David Lynch, Dean of Engineering
"The Faculty of Engineering at the University of Alberta is honoured to have been chosen to establish this new research laboratory and associated NSERC Industrial Research Chair that builds on our strengths in geotechnical and other areas of engineering focused on ground hazard reduction, winter service reliability, risk analysis and safe rail transport. This collaboration between public and private sectors will produce not only the knowledge and practices needed to unleash the full potential of rail transport of our products to diverse markets, but also provide the skilled professionals needed by the rail industry for decades to come. We look forward to working with our industry and government partners in an area of such vital importance to our Canadian economy and society."