



environmental
defence

Dear members of the LRT sub-committee,

I write to you on behalf of Environmental Defence to ask that you reject the city staff recommendation to privatize the operation of the Hamilton LRT.

Environmental Defence supports Environment Hamilton and other environmental and labour advocates in the call to *keep transit public*.

When light rail transit breaks down, it is far more important for the city to have the ability to directly intervene and fix operational problems, than have someone else to blame. By privatizing this function, the city loses this critical lever – and could end up like the City of Ottawa, trying to fix transit operating and maintenance problems in a courtroom.

Rather than thinking about risk, the City of Hamilton should be thinking utmost about responsibility. Responsibility to transit riders. Responsibility to Hamiltonians. And responsibility to the environment. From an environmental perspective, public transit needs to work to meet people's daily needs to be a viable enough option to leave the polluting car at home. But far too often, we've seen the privatization model fail transit riders.

The supposed cost savings from private operation can only come from cutting corners and cutting wages. These cuts only hurt the City of Hamilton in the long run.

There is no reason why the City of Hamilton could not operate Light Rail itself, and build up its own expertise. Hamilton won't stop growing as a city – and will eventually need more rail transit. It only makes sense for the city to begin building operational experience now, and have the direct control needed to fix operational problems if they arise.

This is a generation-defining project that will be transformative for the city and it is crucial that it is done right.

Kind regards,

Nate Wallace
Clean Transportation Program Manager
Environmental Defence