



**PREMIER'S COUNCIL ON THE STATUS OF DISABLED PERSONS
CONSEIL DU PREMIER MINISTRE SUR LA CONDITION DES PERSONNES HANDICAPÉES**

440 King Street, Suite 648, Fredericton, N.B.E3B 5H8
440, rue King, pièce 648, Fredericton (N.-B.) E3B 5H8

TTY&Voice/voix : (506) 444-3000
Toll-free/sans frais : 1-800-442-4412
Fax/télécopieur : (506) 444-3001
E-mail/Courriel : pcsdp@gnb.ca
Website: www.gnb.ca/council
Site Web : www.gnb.ca/conseil

NB Energy and Utilities Board Hearing

March 16, 2010

FREDERICTON, N.B. – Christyne Allain, Executive Director and Lui Greco, Assistant Executive Director from the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons, are registered as interveners for the New Brunswick Energy and Utility Board's hearing on March 17th. The hearing is regarding the Acadian Coach Line request to drop two New Brunswick routes.

Cancelling intercity bus routes could impact almost 13,000 New Brunswick persons with a disability.

In November of 2009, Groupe Orléans Express filed application with the New Brunswick Energy and Utilities Board (EUB) to eliminate service to Charlotte and Northumberland counties. If successful, approximately 13,000 persons living with a disability will no longer have access to the ability to travel independently for medical, school or personal reasons. This number does not include seniors or families living on fixed or modest incomes.

The effected counties have a combined population of just more than 75,000. Statistics Canada publications indicate that 17.2% of the provinces population, excluding persons living on reserves or institutions, has some kind of a disability which severely limits daily living activities.

Acadian has a unique position in the New Brunswick intercity bus travel industry; there's no competition. This monopoly has an associated obligation. That obligation is to provide a reasonable level of service to as many residence of the province as is reasonably possible. The ability to only operate those routes which provide the company with the highest rate of return is what will be decided by the EUB. Were it not for monopolistic/highly regulated industries many people living in remote parts of the province would likely not have telephone service. Service providers such as Canada Post provide service to all Canadians at a reasonable affordable cost. Bus travel should be no different.

If successful, the impact of the proposed cuts will reach far beyond persons with disabilities. Many of the seasonal tourism businesses rely on student help during the summer. If the proposed route changes are successful, tour operators will find it harder still to attract the labor resources they need.

In order that persons with disabilities, those living on fixed or modest incomes and the growing number of seniors can continue to participate fully in all aspects of New Brunswick's future, this link must be preserved. Failing to do so will only erode further the fabric of rural New Brunswick and create yet another barrier for anyone living with a disability.

MEDIA CONTACT: Christyne Allain or Lui Greco, Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons, 506-444-3000

(2010/03/16)

- 30 -