Beat: Travel

VIA Rail Cars Will Be Built In Canada

For The First Time In 40 Years

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USPA NEWS - Prime Minister Mark Carney has announced a $4.7-billion investment in VIA Rail that will see 313 new passenger cars built in Canada.

The investment marks a major milestone for Canada's passenger rail industry. For the first time in 40 years, VIA Rail passenger cars will be manufactured domestically, bringing new activity to Canada's rail manufacturing sector while helping to modernize the Crown corporation's aging fleet.
The announcement is expected to have an impact beyond VIA Rail, with the construction of the new cars supporting Canadian jobs and strengthening the country's domestic manufacturing capacity.

The new cars will be manufactured and assembled in Thunder Bay, Ontario and La Pocatière, Quebec, with Canadian design and engineering work also taking place in Quebec.
The project is expected to support nearly 700 jobs in Ontario and Quebec and generate more than $1.6 billion in economic benefits.
Alstom will also maximize the use of Canadian steel and draw on its network of more than 900 Canadian suppliers.
The new fleet will replace equipment on VIA's long distance, regional and remote routes, some of which are more than 70 years old.

In 2018, Via Rail awarded a 989 million dollar contract to Siemens, and the trains were built at the company's plant in Sacramento, California.

Via's explanation at the time was that trade agreements named the railway specifically and prohibited it from demanding Canadian content, so economic benefit could not be part of the evaluation.

Today Carney announced 4.7 billion dollars for 313 new passenger cars, and every one of them will be built in Canada.

The work goes to Alstom Canada, with manufacturing and assembly in Thunder Bay, Ontario and La Pocatière, Quebec, design and engineering in Saint-Bruno-de-Montarville, and additional work in Kingston.

It is the largest investment in Via Rail's history, supporting close to 700 jobs and more than 1.6 billion dollars in economic benefit.

Under the Buy Canadian Policy, Alstom will draw on a network of more than 900 Canadian suppliers and use Canadian steel in the structural assemblies.

The cars being replaced serve the long distance and remote routes, and they are over 70 years old. As Carney put it, they were built when the NHL had six teams.

This follows 1.6 billion dollars announced in July for 45 new locomotives, plus 357 million for an assembly and maintenance facility in Montreal.

Worth being straight about the timeline. The first new car is expected in 2031, so this is a decade-long build rather than something anyone will ride soon.

The part that matters is the precedent. The same railway that was once told it could not favour Canadian workers is now being used to prove the opposite.

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