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## **Conservative Government Playing Partisan Politics with Public Safety**

Ottawa – The Conservative government is playing politics with the rail safety of Canadians by focusing the majority of funding to improve rail-grade crossings in Conservative-held and Conservative-targeted ridings, Liberal Transport Critic Joe Volpe said today.

“The Minister of Transport has been virtually silent on the issue of railway safety,” said Mr. Volpe. “This allocation of funding will not hide his ineptness and lack of action on the issue of railway safety.”

On April 23, 2007, Transport Minister Lawrence Cannon had the Conservatives’ unelected Minister of Public Works, Michael Fortier, make an announcement on his behalf for railway safety week. \$10.4 million was dedicated to railway grade crossing improvements through 103 different projects, the vast majority of which went to Conservative-held or Conservative-targeted ridings.

“Initiatives to improve safety at railway crossings are always welcome, but this government is not addressing the issue of railway safety and the alarming number of train derailments in a comprehensive way,” said Mr. Volpe.

The recent CN train derailment on April 28, 2007, which created chaos with VIA train travel in Ontario for the fourth time this year, highlights the need for immediate action on railway safety. This year alone, a train has derailed an average of every 3.5 days on a main track line.

“Why has the Minister not made the necessary investments and strengthened regulations compelling railway companies to comply with railway safety standards? And why can the Minister not convince the railway industry to dedicate itself to improved safety outcomes?” said Mr. Volpe.

“The Minister of Transport has had more than a year to implement strong regulatory oversight and come up with a comprehensive plan to improve railway safety in Canada. When will he act?”

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