His Worship Fred Eisenberger
Mayor
City of Hamilton
Hamilton City Centre
230-77 James Street North
Hamilton ON L8R 2K3

Dear Mr. Eisenberger:

Thank you for your correspondence of October 19, 2007, regarding the construction of a new VIA Rail Inc. station in Hamilton.

As you know, the former Minister of Transport announced in March 2003 that VIA would extend its service to Hamilton. It was anticipated that the trains would stop at the downtown GO Transit station. Subsequent discussions resulted in the decision to use a site located along Canadian National track in the Hamilton region to provide through service from the Niagara Peninsula to Niagara Falls.

The decision as to the location of this station is the responsibility of VIA’s management. The federal government provides only broad policy direction to the corporation; actual day-to-day operating decisions, such as the location of stations, are the responsibility of VIA.

I would urge your representatives to work with VIA on this issue, recognizing that the mandate of the corporation is to provide Canadians with a safe, environmentally sustainable and efficient rail passenger system while minimizing the funding required from the federal government. Other goals, such as economic development, are reasonable secondary benefits, but these cannot take precedence over those in the corporation’s mandate.
I understand that you will be meeting with VIA officials on December 18, 2007, to discuss this issue further. Should you wish to contact VIA prior to your meeting, I would invite you to call Mr. Ken Rose, Senior Manager, Real Estate, at 416-253-2468.

I trust that the foregoing has clarified the department’s position with respect to this matter. Thank you for writing.

Yours truly,

[Signature]

The Honourable Lawrence Cannon, P.C., M.P.

c.c.  The Honourable James M. Flaherty, P.C., M.P.
     The Honourable John Baird P.C., M.P.
     Mr. David Sweet, M.P.
     Mr. Mike Wallace, M.P.
     Mr. Dean Allison, M.P.
     Mr. David Christopherson, M.P.
     Mr. Wayne Marston, M.P.