



MEDIA STATEMENT

Subject: Regarding the Alto High-Speed Rail Project and the A2A Corridor

The Algonquin to Adirondacks (A2A) Collaborative is closely monitoring the development of the Alto high-speed rail project, particularly as it moves through some of the most ecologically significant landscapes in Eastern North America.

Our focus is on ensuring that any route respects the unique biological values of this incredible region. Regardless of which route, the Alto train will bisect the A2A ecological corridor, a continental "land bridge" that allows wildlife to move between the Adirondack Mountains in New York and Algonquin Park in Ontario.

As one of the last remaining intact forest and wetland linkages in eastern North America, this corridor is essential for the long-term survival of species ranging from large mammals like moose and bears to sensitive birds and reptiles. It is a globally recognized biodiversity hotspot that offers the best remaining opportunity for north-south wildlife movement. This function is becoming increasingly vital as species shift their ranges in response to a changing climate.

The Alto project presents a major opportunity to modernize our regional transportation and drive the modal shift necessary to reach our climate goals. However, a high-speed rail line is also a significant physical barrier for wildlife. If built without robust ecological mitigation, it risks permanently fragmenting these habitats and preventing the movement many species require to survive.

Our advocacy is focused on ensuring that the "right to roam" for wildlife is built into the project's DNA. This means pushing for:

- **Landscape Permeability:** Ensuring a high frequency of wildlife crossing structures (overpasses, tunnels, and viaducts) so the rail line does not become a wall.
- **Habitat Protection:** Maintaining strict buffer zones around core forest interiors and wetlands.
- **Evidence-Based Design:** Using the best available conservation science to identify and protect the most critical "pinch points" where wildlife movement is most concentrated.

However, for a project of this scale to be truly nation-building, its definition of sustainability must extend beyond the tracks. It must respect the plant and animal kin who also call this region home and need to move through it.

We look forward to continuing our work with the project proponents and local communities to ensure the A2A corridor remains a resilient, interconnected landscape for generations to come.