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Export date: Fri Oct 30 3:49:08 2026 / +0000 GMT

Greyhound Canada shuts down

Written By **Sam Odrowski**

Greyhound Canada shut down all bus services permanently on May 13, creating a gap in cross-regional transit.

After the bus carrier pulled out of Western Canada in 2018, it paused its remaining routes in Ontario and Quebec when COVID-19 hit Canada in March of 2020.

Over a year without revenue made it impossible to continue operations after nearly a century of service in Canada.

Dufferin?Caledon MP Kyle Seeback said the news came as a ?huge disappointment? because so many Canadians rely on Greyhound as an affordable means of transportation.

?I think it's a massive failure by the federal government because Greyhound clearly communicated the issues they were having and the government did not address those issues and find ways to support an important transportation carrier in the country,? he said. ?I think the government should have looked at all kinds of ways to keep them here in Canada, providing the transportation that many Canadians need.?

When looking at a national transit service, which some anti-poverty group leaders and student advocates are calling for to replace Greyhound, Seeback says he doesn't believe it's the right path moving forward.

?I think it's always dangerous when the government decides to create new national anything, because of the costs associated with that. We already have a really large deficit and I never like it when government decides to inject itself into these kinds of things. We have to find ways to support businesses that exist, so that they are able to not just survive, but also to thrive,? Seeback explained.

?I'm interested in finding ways to work with existing companies to expand their transportation networks, but I don't think the government should be providing a national bus transit network for Canadians, because I just think it's going to be run poorly, because governments often run companies not well.?

Seeback said allowing the free market to step in and replace Greyhound, possibly with some form of government support, would be the ideal solution.

?The government can provide some financial assistance to either regional carriers or other start-ups so that they can expand. That would be the best way to go about doing that at this point,? he noted.

?Because having a bus network across the country is a critical piece of infrastructure for people that can't afford to fly or take the train, we've got to find a way to make it work.?

Meanwhile, Dufferin?Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones said one of the things Ontario's Ministry of Transportation (MTO) is doing to assist in promoting cross regional transit was eliminating a licensing requirement for inter-community transportation.

?One of the things that we heard was that licensing requirement for inter community transportation was a barrier, so by removing it, then you see where the further opportunities are,? she explained.

There MTO is currently subsidizing transit in 39 communities across Ontario as a pilot project and depending on its results, the program could be further expanded.

Moving forward, Seeback said the government has to move very quickly on replacing Greyhound as Canadians will be moving out

of lockdown and likely wanting to travel to friends and family who they haven't seen in over a year.

?We need actual action and I think we need action really quickly,? he remarked.

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