

Dear President of the Rhone-Alps region,

«**In the 1950s, people came to Haute-Savoie for its pure air, now they are leaving due to its pollution**». This shocking statement, made by a holiday-maker, accurately reflects the situation in our department. Pollution isn't just the concern of a handful of ecologists, but is now a major scourge for Haute-Savoie and the health of its inhabitants. A scourge too for its tourism economy and one which requires everyone to take responsibility.

The problem in Haute-Savoie is clearly known:

- The levels of particulates (PM10 and 2.5) are much higher than the health protection thresholds fixed by WHO.
- The levels of fine particulates (PM2.5) in Annecy are greater than those in all the large cities of France and are comparable to the levels in Rome and Brussels (on a four year average).
- At least 40 deaths in 100,000 inhabitants in the Arve valley are, each year, linked directly to air pollution.
- The situation is so serious that an Atmospheric Protection Plan has been devised in the Arve Valley, including the Mont Blanc region and its world famous ski resorts.

Yet Haute-Savoie has a great asset: 235kms of railway lines that are 100% electrified. This is an alternative transport solution which, coupled with mainly hydro-electric energy, would generate far fewer atmospheric emissions.

While Haute-Savoie has experienced strong demographic growth (+1.4% per year since 1982) and is now the 3rd largest department of Rhone-Alps, **its rail services keep getting cut** and are inconvenient to use:

- Gaps of two hours in the timetable on the Annecy-Annemasse, St Gervais-Annemasse and Annecy-St Gervais lines.
- Few trains at weekends (for the second most visited department of France after Paris).
- Bad or missing connections to serve the rest of the department at Annemasse, Bellegarde and Annecy.

Moreover Haute-Savoie rail services keep being reduced each year:

- Six-fold increase in the number of buses that have replaced regional TER trains since 2007, even though diesel emissions have been classified as carcinogenic by WHO.
- Removal of 80% of direct trains between St Gervais and Lyon in 2012.
- Elimination of evening trains between Annemasse and Annecy in 2010.
- Elimination of trains between Annecy-Geneva and Evian-Valence in 2007.

As a consequence, in 2014, **Haute Savoie has 42% fewer trains than Loire, even though both departments have around 750,000 inhabitants each.**

It is no wonder, with such poor availability, that only 5.6% of journeys are made by public transport and more than 80% of holiday makers arrive in Haute-Savoie by car.

In order to meet its needs, for work, tourism, leisure, shopping and the protection of the environment, I would like **Haute-Savoie to be treated as well as other departments of Rhone-Alps and request:**

- A train every 30 minutes at peak times on all lines.
- The return of direct trains between St Gervais-Lyon, St Gervais-Grenoble and Evian/St Gervais –Valence.
- The switch back to trains for services transferred onto buses since 2007, in order to protect air quality.
- A week-end rail service that matches the needs of a highly touristic destination.
- Convenient connections to TGV services in Annecy and Bellegarde for the rest of the department, all the way to St Gervais.
- Coordination of regional rail services with local public transport offers, in order to serve the needs of Haute-Savoie smartly and more efficiently.

Counting on your understanding and willingness to take action in this matter.

Yours sincerely.