

## Sarmi: “The Pedemontana will be completed”

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Already, **3600 motorists have registered with Conto Targa**, the Lombard Pedemontana Motorway system that will give discounts, for the next few months, from 1 November, when tolls will be applied on the new motorway and bypasses of Varese and Como.

The number was provided by the **Pedemontana Chairman, Massimo Sarmi**, during the hearing of the Lombardy Regional Transport Committee. The CEO of CAL, **Paolo Besozzi**, and Councillor **Alessandro Sorte** (who left, however, and did not provide any answers, *ed.*), were also called to appear before the committee.

Sarmi and Besozzi provided reassurances over the feasibility of the work and its necessity. There are no Plan Bs, only one objective, to complete the work, with the application of tolls and, above all, with the investments that private individuals should make now that the business plan can benefit from the tax exemptions granted by the government.

According to Sarmi, **the business plan is in line with the revenues coming in on the stretch of the Pedemontana open to traffic (Cassano Magnago-Lentate sul Seveso) and, in particular, the section linking the A8 and A9 motorways will give greater revenues.** In contrast, the Varese bypass is below expectations, with traffic well below forecasts. The higher tolls, compared to many motorways, **were justified by the Chairman by the fact that a part will be needed for maintenance, and the remainder, to pay for the new sections.**

Sarmi appeared confident also about the **new bid to raise the €2 billion necessary to complete the work**, after the previous bid was abandoned, casting serious doubts on the continuation of the work. “A year ago, the rating agency Fitch gave us a negative credit watch and a negative outlook,” Sarmi said. “This affected the judgement of the situation of the holding company Serravalle, but now that the problem has been resolved, the rating agency’s judgement has become positive, and this should help.” Sarmi also said that he had received several requests for information from people interested in investing, but the bid is still underway.

**The answers given by Sarmi and Besozzi certainly did not fully satisfy the opposition councillors**, starting with Luca Gaffuri and **Alessandro Alfieri** of the Democratic Party, who said, “Maroni had assured us that the Region would use its own resources to keep the Pedemontana and the Varese and Como bypasses free of charge until 1 November. But today, the Chairman, Sarmi, has said that the council hasn’t made any commitment. The truth is that the Pedemontana is still not covered economically, and there are no guarantees over its completion and the building of compensatory works, which were included in the initial project. In the meantime, however, the toll will be charged starting next Monday, even on the Varese and Como bypasses.”

**Gianmarco Corbetta**, of the Movimento 5 Stelle, was even more harsh. “The hearing with the Chairman and the CEO of the Pedemontana, Sarmi e Besozzi, was very disappointing. They just came to blow smoke, but the problems still remain. They said nothing about environmental compensation measures, which are extremely late, and they did nothing more than confirm what we knew, that there are no certainties about the financial closing of the work. Brianza can’t afford to have these roads left unfinished for the next thirty years. The hearing with the Mayors of the towns in Brianza, who spoke before three regional councillors, including me, was surreal. Councillor Sorte didn’t even bother to appear, which demonstrates that the Region is unable to give answers to the real problems of the people.”

di Translated by Moro & Pellegrino (Reviewed by Prof. Rolf Cook)