



May 21, 2003

Honourable David M. Collenette, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Transport  
Transport Canada  
Tower C, Place deVille  
330 Sparks Street  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A ON5

Dear Mr. Collenette:

We write to request that the Department of Transport reinstate its review of Canada's international air access policy, suspended following the tragic events of 9/11. Prior to this suspension, the federal government's expressed intent was to encourage a national discussion concerning liberalization of this policy through greater recognition of the interests of Canadian communities respecting international air access.

In this regard please note our letter to you of April 19, 2001 reflecting our comments regarding this policy area. For convenience a copy of that letter is here enclosed.

We endorse the same request for resumption of this policy review as was expressed in the July 4, 2002 letter to Ms Dufour and Mr. Robertson of your Department from Mr. Berg, Chair of the Canadian Airports Council ("CAC"). The Metropolitan Halifax Chamber of Commerce agrees with the CAC that,

...with respect to international air transportation services...there is a strong and immediate need for significant liberalization of trading rights. Canada is a trading nation, reliant on the free and unencumbered movement of goods and passengers by air for much of its prosperity. To this end...Canada must adopt an open skies policy that would allow airlines to provide the services

.....2

The Canadian air industry, including shippers, passengers and Canadian communities such as Metro Halifax that could benefit from enhanced international air access, continuously confronts and deals with dynamic change. Waiting for a so-called “right” time to resume this policy review is tantamount to accepting the status quo. Many industry participants and observers, including the federal government itself in initiating this policy review, have recognized that it is appropriate that our international air access policies be revisited.

With respect, we feel that your Department’s current “Straight Ahead, A Vision for Transportation for Canada” document, which recommends the continued gradual liberalization of international air policy, does not adequately address, nor encourage public input respecting, this important policy area.

We therefore urge that your Department resume this policy review initiative without further delay. We would be pleased to have an opportunity to speak to you in greater detail at your early convenience respecting this important matter.

Yours truly,

Valerie A. Payn  
President

Enclosure