

May 29, 2023

Hon. Omar Alghabra, MP
Minister of Transport

Re: Discussion Document on the Future of Air Travel

Dear Minister Alghabra,

As Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade, we represent Canada's major cities and act as a voice for the private sector across the country. We are writing to express our concerns regarding proposed changes to the governance of Canadian airports.

Canadian airports are crucial gateways for domestic and international trade, supporting various industries and playing a vital role in the Canadian economy, businesses, and communities. Due to Canada's extensive geography and dispersed population, Canadians and Canadian businesses rely on a reliable and predictable air transportation system to connect with loved ones as well as access critical goods and services. We extend our gratitude for the federal government's continued support of the federal aviation sector and our airports, particularly during the unprecedented challenges faced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We want to highlight our perspective on the significant implications for Canadian airports and the economy.

Local control and input have proven to be crucial to the success of Canada's airport models. The current governance models for our cities' airports allow for thoughtful and sufficient local representation, diversity, and a balanced mix of industry and government stakeholders. Board members and the Chair are bound by their fiduciary duty to the airport authorities they serve, ensuring transparency and accountability. We are strongly opposed to an increased federal government role in choosing board members or chairs. Expanding the government's role in the selection process risks jeopardizing the already established transparent and effective process.

As broad changes to airports' financial and economic regulation are considered, we believe that work should start with factors within the government's control including but not limited to the CBSA and CATSA. In addition, the policy framework surrounding airport rents should be reassessed. These revenues should be re-invested back into aviation infrastructure.

Thank you for considering our concerns and the valuable contributions that Canadian airports make to our communities and national economy. Ensuring affordable, effective, and safe service that is technologically advanced and industry-leading will benefit us all. We look forward to continuing to work with you and other stakeholders to ensure the long-term prosperity of our airports.

Sincerely,



Bridgitte Anderson
President and CEO



Michel Leblanc
President and CEO



Jan De Silva
President and CEO



Loren Remillard
President and CEO



Todd Letts
President and CEO



Patrick Sullivan
President and CEO



Sueling Ching
President and CEO

CC:

The Hon. Carla Qualtrough
The Hon. Pablo Rodriguez
The Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau
The Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos
The Hon. Patricia Hajdu
The Hon. Marci Ien
The Hon. Helena Jaczek
The Hon. Kamal Khera
The Hon. Seamus O'Regan Jr.
The Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor
The Hon. Filomena Tassi
The Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson
The Hon. Daniel Vandal
Arun Thangaraj, Deputy Minister, Transport Canada
Serge Bijimine, Assistant Deputy Minister, Transport Canada