



28 January 2013

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The Honourable Denis Lebel, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Lebel:

Enclosed is a resolution developed recently by the City of Mascouche, QC concerning the future of their airport. I am writing to you to explain how this issue illustrates a major flaw in the National Airports Policy and to ask you to fulfill your responsibility to ensure that there is an adequate system of airports in Canada, starting with intervening in the Mascouche issue.

I hope you will agree that smaller airports continue to fill a major role in our national transportation system, including being reliever airports for the busier National airports and training facilities for future commercial pilots and mechanics. Nowhere is this concept more important than in major cities such as Edmonton, Toronto and Montreal, where a significant portion of Canada's population resides and where demand for readily accessible airports exists as a destination for the travelling public and as conveniently-located training locations for the local population. Unfortunately, the National Airports Policy distances the federal government from these airports by boldly claiming that the communities will do what is best to maintain the system. The deterioration and closing of the reliever airports in Edmonton, Toronto and Montreal clearly demonstrate that the Policy has some serious flaws. These communities are dismantling the reliever airport system. Only the federal government can turn this situation around before it is too late.

When Mr. Baird was Transport Minister he replied to my plea for action in Mascouche with a statement that the requirement for it to operate as an airport expired in 2011 and that the federal government had no authority to intervene. We could debate about authority but COPA firmly believes that you have a responsibility to ensure that major cities like Montreal continue to have adequate airport facilities to meet the needs of the entire spectrum of the air transportation system. I would like to point out that St Hubert Airport, whose requirement to be an airport expires in 2014, is under severe stress with a class action suit for noise. It may close as a consequence of the class action suit and if Mascouche also closes Montreal will be without any nearby reliever airports.

Your intervention in Mascouche and conduct of a review of the National Airports Policy are urgently requested.

Yours truly,

Kevin Psutka  
President and CEO