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January 11, 2022

Honourable Omar Alghabra
Transport Minister
House of Parliament
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Transport Canada – Aviation and Airport Access,

Sir,

Further to my letter of December 10, 2021, regarding this issue of Transport Canada's proposed changes to aerodrome standards, I am writing to express my concern on behalf of aerodromes across this country about the impact Transport Canada's changes to these facilities and their users including time-critical medivac flights, resource company crew changes, tourism and a variety of other uses.

Transport Canada – Aviation announced via an Advisory Circular that there has been a pause of the implementation of the changes to aerodrome standards – Advisory Circular (AC) 301-001 Issue 4. This AC has paused the implementation of these changes *“by 3 months while it undertakes the process of amending the attestation specifications. The intent is to reduce its impact on aerodrome access while at the same time harmonizing the level of safety offered at all Canadian airports with regards to the obstacle free environment needed to support instrument approach procedures. Publication of the revised specifications is planned for the first quarter of 2022”*¹.

The fundamental mistake made by Transport Canada – Civil Aviation in this whole affair beginning in 2018 is that it failed to follow a proper and rational process in contemplating changes to the aerodrome standards. With a three-month timeline to review this issue and promulgate a new standard, the same mistake is happening again.

In order to properly implement any changes to the aerodrome standards, Transport Canada, at a minimum, has to do the following:

¹ AC 301-001 Issue 4 3.0 Background Paragraph (2).



1. **Risk Assessment:** a proper and comprehensive Risk Assessment has to be performed to understand what, if any, risks the existing standards pose aviation safety. In other words, is there an unacceptable risk to aviation safety and this would have to be demonstrated by any known accidents or incidents with the existing standards or is this a solution looking for a problem.
2. **Impact Assessment:** to understand the impact these changes will have upon the user community. This includes the decrease in aerodrome access and other effects. These include the economic cost to move obstacles such as buildings, fuel tanks, terrain, etc. to satisfy the new obstacle clearance standards and return the aerodrome to its former level of service, the economic cost of aircraft not being able use the aerodrome and the human cost of seriously ill patients not being able to be airlifted to major treatment centres. While Transport Canada – Civil Aviation's focus is the narrow aviation considerations, other, broader considerations including economic development of resource facilities, tourism and health also have to be taken into consideration. With respect to the health issue, the health ministries of each province need to be consulted as the health care needs of its citizens are profoundly affected when medevac aircraft are unable to access these aerodromes.
3. **Industry Consultation:** the original industry consultation process consisted of presenting the old and new standards to industry groups with information provided regarding the real-world implications of reduced airport access nor the cost to upgrade aerodromes to comply with the new standards. Meaningful industry consultation means providing to knowledgeable industry members the impact of the proposed changes.
4. **Meaningful Recognition of Canada's Unique Circumstances:**
 - a. The previous justification for the changes to aerodrome standards was to comply with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) standards. Canada is



not compelled to follow either of these organizations. Canada has filed hundreds of "Differences" with ICAO and this is a normal practice.

- b. ICAO and FAA standards that make sense for major airports like London (Heathrow) and Toronto (Pearson) make no sense for smaller aerodromes.
- c. Credit has to be given for the use of modern, satellite-based navigation technology which have provided a hitherto fore level of navigation accuracy.
- d. Grandfathering the current standards to aerodromes – it is instructive to note that certified airports were able to use grandfathering provisions when Transport Canada changed TP 312 from Edition 4 to Edition 5 yet grandfathering is not being offered to aerodromes with its aerodrome standards changes. It cannot be forgotten that aerodromes across this country based their development upon a certain set of conditions and changes the standards will cause this development to be offside and require millions of dollars of work to move hangars, fuel tanks, etc.
- e. Recognition of Canada's unique sparsely populated areas and our reliance upon reliable air transport for medevacs and other applications such as resource aerodromes– Canada is not the US nor Britain nor the other countries that comprise of ICAO.
- f. While Transport Canada – Civil Aviation's narrow focus is aviation safety a *wholistic* assessment of this issue is needed – these changes may theoretically prevent an airplane accident sometime in the future, it is not a theoretical possibility that medevac patients will not be airlifted to major treatment centres if the aircraft cannot access the aerodrome in poor weather. To be blunt, sick and injured people are going to die when they cannot get medevac'd out in a timely manner.



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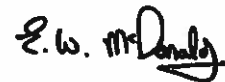
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The three-month timeline that Transport Canada – Civil Aviation has allotted to revisit this issue is simply inadequate. Reliable air transportation is a vital service in Canada and changes that will adversely affect it demand a proper and thorough examination of the risks, costs and benefits of change. This takes more than three months and, as indicated by the advisory circular itself, none of the steps such as risk assessment, etc. are part of that review.

It should be noted that when Transport Canada wishes to change the Canadian Air Regulations, a full and proper review is required with the some of the steps above as a mandatory part of the process. This was done with TP 312, Airport Standards, since is part of CARS. Since aerodrome standards is not part of CARS, the advisory circular method is being used to make changes. This is simply an end run around doing a proper and professional analysis.

I would strongly urge you to have your department undertake the steps outlined above in an unbiased and thorough manner before any making any changes.

Sincerely,



Ed McDonald, P.Eng. MBA

CC: Annie Koutrakis, Parliamentary Secretary to the Transport Minister
Melissa Lantsman, Shadow Minister for Transport
Blaine Calkins, MP Red Deer – Lacombe
Nicholas Robinson, Transport Canada
Felix Meunier, Transport Canada
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