

HOUSE COMMITTEE STUDYING AVIATION SAFETY IN CANADA

The House Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities (TRAN) has engaged in a study on Aviation Safety in Canada. ATAC welcomes this initiative and was happy to testify before the Committee on April 6th.

ATAC raised four major issues: Fatigue Risk Management and the proposed new Transport Canada regulations, Safety Management Systems, Pilot Fitness to Fly, and Transport Canada Level of Service.

Transport Canada has taken very different stances on Fatigue Risk Management and Safety Management Systems. The first issue is driven by Transport Canada's desire to comply with ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices. While that objective is commendable, the socio-economic cost of the proposed measures has to be seriously taken into account. This is where industry's cooperation becomes key to the successful implementation of the new regulations. Industry has been saying for years that a Canadian adaptation of ICAO Standards is essential if we wish to minimize the impact on the service Canadians require. Still, Transport Canada insists that the proposed regulation doesn't add increased operational costs to Canadian carriers, an unsubstantiated claim unanimously rejected by industry.

ATAC insists that the proposed new regulations will not enhance safety but will erode it through many unintended consequences, including inefficient use of valuable and limited experienced flight crew members. The proposed regulations will require that large airlines poach these resources from smaller carriers, leaving a huge vacuum of experienced pilots.

Safety Management Systems (SMS) are widely recognized by industry as having

both a financial and safety benefit. The Transportation Safety Board has advocated for industry-wide implementation of SMS and ATAC has invested significantly in the development of a SMS template designed with the size and complexity of the smaller operator.

ATAC cannot endorse Transport Canada's recent decision to shelve SMS implementation for the smaller carriers indefinitely for apparent lack of resources to oversee its application.

Smaller operators would benefit the most from SMS yet Transport Canada prefers to concentrate on imposing poorly planned Fatigue Risk Management regulations devoid of any cost analysis and input resulting from industry consultations.

Fitness of Flight crews has been an area of interest for ATAC long before the Germanwings accident. Our insistence is that there needs to be a better dialogue between Transport Canada and the employers on loss of privileges. Where do you draw the line between the protection of privacy and the safety of the public? We have offered Transport Canada our assistance and suggestions in the hopes of finding a socially acceptable solution that enhances safety for the travelling public. Transport Canada appears to be waiting for the solution to come from another state.

Following the December 31, 2016 incident in which an airline's personnel dutifully prevented an intoxicated pilot from assuming control of an airplane, the Minister wrote to all Canadian air operators demanding that they confirm that "protocols are being implemented with all the required resources, including measures designed to confirm pilots' fitness to fly". The Minister missed an excellent opportunity to reassure the travelling public by using this incident

to point out that safety systems are effective in the Canadian air transport industry and should be praised.

Transport Canada Level of Service has been an issue for many years and ATAC has often offered to help find solutions which would help the Department carry out its mandate more efficiently. There is no need for a formal inquiry into Transport Canada safety policies and practices, but two things are desperately needed if the Department is to offer the level of service required by our industry.

One is obviously an adequate operating budget. While demand for air services in Canada has been growing at an annual rate of almost 5% the Transport Canada - Aviation Safety budget has been consistently cut. Total Aviation Safety Estimates for 2017-18 were set at \$185.5M, down from \$248.5M in 2011-12. That is a \$63M or a 25.4% cut in six years, making it increasingly difficult for Transport Canada to properly carry-out its mandate.

The other is that in the face of such cuts, Transport Canada needs to review its operations and focus on the key elements of its mandate. ATAC has been advocating for years that administrative duties be delegated to third parties and that Transport Canada concentrate on improving the efficiency of those key safety related oversight activities.

We hope that the Members of the House Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities recognize that air transport is a key socio-economic driver and that the Government needs to support it rather than simply see it as a revenue stream. This would require that the Minister of Transport champion this idea and counter the Minister of Finance's endless appetite for revenue which holds little consideration for the long-term impact on our industry and on the Canadian people who rely on it.

John McKenna
President and CEO