



**FREDERICTON
CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE**

— *The Voice of Business* —

364 York Street, Suite 200
Fredericton, NB
E3B 3P7



11 March 2016

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc
328 Main Street (Main Office) Suite I
Shediac, New Brunswick
E4P 2E3

Re: NAS Airport Funding, Fredericton International Airport

Dear Mr LeBlanc:

We are writing today at the request of Fredericton International Airport CEO Johanne Gallant as a follow-up to her recent meeting with you regarding issues with federal funding for small (fewer than 500,000 annual passengers) National Airport System (hereinafter “NAS”) airports - such as the Fredericton International Airport. This is an issue that our board of directors and executive committee have been working on for several years and strongly concur with the position of Ms Gallant.

While the NAS is self-sufficient overall, the smallest of these airports (despite increasing passenger loads) are not able to independently generate the full amount required to maintain capital infrastructure. In addition to Fredericton, these include airports in Prince George, Charlottetown, Gander and Saint John. The federal government recognizes the infrastructure funding challenges of smaller airports in Canada through the National Airports Policy which created the Airports Capital Assistance Program (hereinafter “ACAP”). These funds are available to airports with fewer than 525,000 annual passengers but specifically excludes airports that sit on Crown Land, which includes all NAS airports. There are no other targeted funding programs for these airports.

The issue is particularly acute for the Fredericton airport which was designed to accommodate 200,000 annual passengers but has seen steady year-over-year increases in passengers coming through the airport, hitting the 350,000 mark in 2015. In many ways this is a ‘good’ problem to have as these numbers reflect a growing population and economy in the Capital Region, but an expanded airport is needed to continue this growth. As our local economy is heavily reliant on the knowledge, engineering, and other professional services sectors, efficient access to air travel is essential to exporting our services and bringing top-quality talent to the area - amongst other concerns.



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In our most recent survey, Fredericton Chamber of Commerce members placed the airport expansion as the region's top infrastructure priority for economic growth by a clear margin. We also have the support of the Atlantic Chamber of Commerce, who wrote to former Transportation Minister Lisa Raitt in February 2015 about the issue (attached). Municipal and provincial officials have also expressed their support for the expansion, but this federal policy issue remains a roadblock.

The smallest NAS airports are critical national infrastructure assets and critical to regional economies that have to be properly maintained and renewed to keep pace with growth. We ask that you continue to work with Ms Gallant, the Department of Transportation and any other stakeholders necessary to address this unintended consequence of otherwise good policy.

Yours truly,

Stephen Hill
President, Fredericton Chamber of Commerce

Krista Ross
CEO, Fredericton Chamber of Commerce

cc: Hon. Brian Gallant, Premier, Province of New Brunswick
cc: Matt DeCoursey, MP, Fredericton
cc: Johanne Gallant, CEO, Fredericton International Airport
cc: Valerie Roy, CEO, Atlantic Chamber of Commerce