

September 12, 2024

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.

Prime Minister of Canada
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A2

The Honourable Steven MacKinnon, P.C., M.P.

Minister of Labour and Seniors
Place du Portage Phase II
165 de l'Hôtel-de-Ville Street
Gatineau, Québec J8X 3X2

The Honourable Pablo Rodriguez, P.C., M.P.

Minister of Transport and Quebec Lieutenant
330 Sparks Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0N5

Re: Immediate Action Needed to Avert Disruption to Air Travel in British Columbia

Dear Prime Minister and Ministers,

We are writing on behalf of 17 British Columbia-based business associations and our collective memberships to urge the federal government's immediate intervention to prevent the upcoming Air Canada pilot strike. This issue has grave implications not only for the Canadian economy but especially for British Columbia, where dependable air travel is critical to the economic and social well-being of our province.

As you know, Air Canada is Canada's largest airline and the largest provider of scheduled passenger services in the Canadian market, the Canada-U.S. transborder market and in the international market to and from Canada. Any disruption would send ripples through our provincial economy, affecting everything from local jobs to international trade. British Columbia's tourism season, a key economic driver in our province, would be impacted significantly by this work stoppage.

The tourism season remains ongoing into the fall, and cruise ships continue to visit our ports. Vancouver is one of three Air Canada hubs, and the airline's gateway to the Asia-Pacific. This shutdown would impact not only tourism within B.C., but also international visitors' ability to come to and from Canada. We are also concerned about damages to our reputation as a tourist destination, especially with large scale events coming to Vancouver in the coming years like FIFA 2026. We want Vancouver, B.C. and Canada to be known internationally as dependable and reliable destinations for visitors.

In addition to tourism, a strike at Air Canada would threaten critical industries, including life sciences, agriculture, and others which rely on air cargo for time-sensitive shipments. It would also impact businesses across the province that depend on stable air services to connect with national and international markets.

British Columbia's vast geography, diverse economy, and widely dispersed population make air travel indispensable for both business and personal purposes. Air Canada serves as a vital connection for rural, remote and Indigenous communities, providing access to major hubs and by extension, essential services including healthcare and international travel. A disruption in air service would risk further isolating these areas and B.C. as a whole, leading to a loss of economic activity and exacerbating challenges already faced by our remote and Indigenous communities.

An Air Canada strike would have disruptive effects. As witnessed during rail disruptions, stoppages in key transportation networks cause disproportionate harm to our economy. In British Columbia, a province still recovering from floods, wildfires, and other natural disasters, a stable and accessible air travel system is more essential than ever. Without early intervention, the upcoming strike could further destabilize our economy, resulting in layoffs, reduced business operations, and delays in crucial services.

We ask the federal government to act swiftly and decisively by using every tool in your toolkit to prevent a work stoppage. By doing so, the government can safeguard the interests of all Canadians, ensure continuity of air travel, and prevent significant economic and social disruption.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent issue. We urge the government to protect British Columbia and Canada's connectivity and economic stability. Dependable air service is not just a convenience; it is an economic and social necessity for our communities, businesses, and industries.

Sincerely,



Bridgitte Anderson
President and CEO



Ingrid Jarrett
President and CEO



Jeff Guignard
Executive Director



Ian Tostenson
President and CEO



Walt Judas
CEO



Linda Coady
President and CEO



Minto Schneider
Board Chair



Miles Prodan
President and CEO



Mark von Schellwitz
Vice President, Western
Canada



Greg Wilson
Director, Government
Relations, BC



Clint Fraser
Chair



Erin Gless
Executive Director



Brad Harrison
Executive Director



Colin Carson
Chair



Royce Chwin
President and CEO



Fiona Famulak
President and CEO



Laura Jones
President and CEO

Copies to:

The Honourable David Eby, Premier of British Columbia

The Honourable Brenda Bailey, B.C. Minister of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation

The Honourable Lana Popham, B.C. Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport

The Honourable Rob Fleming, B.C. Minister of Transportation