

October 6, 2020

Scott Streiner
Chair and CEO
Canadian Transportation Agency
15 Eddy Street
Gatineau, QC, K1A 0N9

Dear Mr. Streiner

This letter is a follow up to our letter dated April 9, 2020, in which the CAC and our members expressed full support for the CTA's Accessible Transportation for Persons with Disabilities Regulations (ATPDR) and respectfully requested a one-year exemption to the regulations coming into force on June 25, 2020. We acknowledge and appreciate the response received from the CTA and the exemption granted on several ATPDR provisions to December 31, 2020. However, with the COVID-19 pandemic continuing to have a devastating financial and operational impact on the Canadian aviation industry, including airports, we wish to request an additional extension to the Exemption Order previously issued by the CTA.

In addition, we wish to raise supplemental concerns regarding the coming into force of regulations scheduled for 2021 and 2022.

Due to the ongoing severe developments associated with COVID-19, which continue to evolve, CAC's membership respectfully request an additional one-year exemption to the ATPDR provisions that were extended to December 31, 2020. These provisions include:

- Making websites accessible such that they meet the requirements for a Level AA conformance that are set out in the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines;
- Providing information in alternative formats;
- developing new training programs in consultation with the community of persons with disabilities;

- Assisting persons with disabilities between the curb and the check-in for arriving passengers, and between the general public area and curb for departing passengers;
- Creating relief areas for service dogs.

The situation at Canada's airports remains dire from both a financial and operational perspective, with the funds required to complete capital infrastructure projects continuing to be a significant challenge and many projects being cancelled or deferred.

A top priority at airports remains, as it has been since the early days of COVID-19, actions that must be taken to ensure the safety and security of their passengers, employees and contractors from this relentless pandemic. In addition, since the COVID-19 pandemic began, airports have had to reduce and/or consolidate airport operations and many have significantly reduced their workforce.

As a result of COVID-19, 2020 traffic is now estimated to drop by 72 per cent over 2019, and 65 per cent in 2021. Airports expect to lose \$4.5 billion in revenue in that same timeframe. With highly fixed costs associated with meeting regulatory requirements, Canada's airports expect to take on an additional \$2.8 billion in debt by the end of 2021 to cover cash flows and maintain safe operations. We expect it will take 4-5 years for Canada's air sector to recover.

Airports are in a highly precarious situation, financially. To maintain essential operations they must introduce significant reductions to operating and capital expenditures, which means in many cases reassessing the implementation of their projects. Two regulations of primary concern are wheelchair modifications and automated self-service kiosks.

While many of the wheelchairs located within airport terminals meet the requirements of the ATPDR, "aisle chairs" utilized to board the aircraft are required under the ATPDR to have movable armrests. The modifications required to make them compliant would render the current chairs unusable while being modified; therefore, modification is not an option. Instead, the aisle chairs will need to be replaced to be compliant with the ATPDR as of June 25, 2021. Since this cost will be covered by the air carrier community, replacement of the chairs will further impact their own precarious financial situation resulting from COVID-19. The CAC recommends flexibility for airports to replace aisle chairs as part of the normal asset replacement cycle.

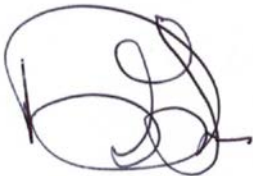
Another concern is the requirement that all airport authority owned or controlled self-service kiosks must be accessible to new standards by June 25, 2022. While many airports have been working to ensure check-in, government agency and parking self-service kiosks meet national standards specified by the ATPDR, touchless technology is

being considered as an alternative. These assessments and eventual procurements will require capital expenditures and additional time to develop requirements, which have been complicated by COVID-19. The CAC requests greater flexibility for airports to replace their current kiosks in line with the new requirements as part of the normal asset replacement cycle. Airports would continue to maintain a minimum of 25% accessible check-in kiosks, per the current requirement in the Code of Practice, subject to technological innovations that may eliminate the need for such kiosks. Airports would also be able to provide an equitable alternative process for persons with disabilities, should an accessible self-service kiosk not be available or required.

CAC members appreciate the important of providing equitable access to airports for travellers with disabilities and are committed to meeting the new requirements of the ATPDR. However, under this unprecedented COVID-19 situation, the safety of personnel, financial and operational impacts should also be given proper consideration by the CTA.

We look forward to receiving your response and remain available should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DRG', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Daniel-Robert Gooch
President