

November 5, 2024

Canadian Transportation Agency

OTC.FPRTA.Consultations-Consultation.CTA.ATCC@otc-cta.gc.ca

Re: Canadian Transportation Agency Consultation: Air travel complaints fee proposal

To Whom it May Concern:

On behalf of the Calgary Airport Authority, one of the largest airports in Canada, I would like to strongly urge the Canadian Transportation Agency (CTA) to not proceed with the proposed regime for air traveller complaints fee.

I believe this proposed fee would further challenge the affordability and accessibility of air travel for Canadians, especially in rural areas of Canada. Air travel is essential for Canadians across vast regions, connecting our communities to each other and to global markets. Affordable air service is vital to our local economy, competitiveness, and quality of life. The proposal to impose a fee for complaints against airlines will lead to higher travel costs and reduced connectivity for travelers.

The Canadian model of self-funding within the aviation sector means that cost increases for airlines ultimately get passed down to travelers. In this context, the CTA's proposal risks not only making travel less affordable but also reducing Canada's competitive standing as an accessible and appealing destination. This change would come at a time when the sector is still recovering from the effects of the pandemic, with airlines and airports working hard to restore routes and services to meet travelers' needs.

The high proposed fee of \$790 per complaint, regardless of the complaint's outcome, could further strain the ability of carriers to maintain affordable fares and regular service. For communities, where air travel is a critical link, particularly for regional and remote connections, the proposed fee structure could be especially detrimental. Smaller markets are already grappling with recovery challenges, and increased operational costs could result in reduced service, higher ticket prices, and diminished connectivity. Regional connectivity in Canada is still at only 70% of pre-pandemic levels, and in some cases, at 50%, as fleet adjustments, pilot shortages, and narrow margins challenge airlines and limit travelers' options.

It is vital that the CTA consider the full impact of this fee proposal on regional access and connectivity, and on the ability of communities to provide cost-effective air service. The unintended consequences of this cost-recovery approach could be fewer options and more expensive travel for Canadians—a burden on travelers and a setback for regional economies that depend on reliable and affordable air service.

We strongly urge the CTA to reconsider the proposed cost-recovery fee, as its current form will ultimately reduce connectivity, increase travel costs, and undermine the competitiveness of Canadian economy. An effective passenger protection system should aim to enhance service without imposing additional financial burdens on travelers or diminishing regional connectivity.

Sincerely,



Chris Dinsdale
President & CEO
The Calgary Airport Authority