

## **COPA Responds to Biased CBC Report on Emergency Locator Transmitters**

By Kevin Psutka, COPA president and CEO

Members are reacting to a CBC report by Evan Solomon on what he perceives is a need for mandating 406 ELTs. The article is biased in the extreme and does not present all of the facts. Mr. Solomon was provided with the facts and background to this issue from COPA's perspective, including our advocacy for alternatives and for provisions to soften the financial burden of implementing mandatory requirements, such as elimination of the wasteful and unsafe requirement of sending the new ELTs out for recertification annually but Mr. Solomon chose not to report these COPA-recommended solutions to the problem.

COPA continues to work this issue with Transport Canada. Following on remarks made by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Transport Minister during an interview for the article, I sent the following message to Martin Eley, the Director General of Civil Aviation:

“Martin:

In light of the biased and misleading CBC report on the issue <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/search-and-rescue-for-false-alarms-costs-millions-1.2594306> and statements made by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Transport Minister in the MPs interview portion of the report, has anything changed about the course of action for this issue; that is, TC's status report on the NPAs which states that 406 will be mandatory for international air transport operations and not domestically mandated?

I would appreciate being kept in the loop on this very important issue.”

COPA remains opposed to mandatory equipage with 406 ELTs because they do not significantly improve the very unacceptable failure rate. Since the ELT must survive the crash in order to start doing its job, and given that in 40 to 70% of the cases, ELTs, including the new ones, fail to get a signal up to a satellite because they were destroyed, the antenna cable detached, the G switch failed to detect the crash, the wreckage was inverted or sunk, dependence on this concept for alerting and finding downed aircraft is a flawed approach to the issue.

COPA has never been opposed to ELTs but it should be up to each aircraft owner, depending on his/her type and area of operation, to determine what is best to meet the requirement. If retention of their 121.5 ELT is considered appropriate for their type and area of operation, COPA has urged and continues to urge members to carry an additional device such as a tracking device and service, personal locator beacon or satellite phone and employ procedures to maximize their prospects for being found in the event that their ELT, including the new ones, fail to perform as designed. Procedures include filing and following flight plans, keeping a responsible person informed of your plans and providing them with departure and arrival reports, and monitor 121.5 whenever they fly in order to assist in the detection of ELTs.