

## Minister of Transport responds to COPA letter

COPA President and CEO Kevin Psutka wrote to Transport Minister Lisa Raitt and invited her to meet with COPA and discuss the need to formally review the National Airports Policy in light of a number of municipalities across the country currently resisting expansion or even the existence of local aerodromes. The letter which was emailed to the minister appeared in the August 22 COPA eFlight. On Friday Oct. 11, Minister of Transport responded to Psutka's letter by email: I am responding to your emails of June 11 and 12, 2013, to my predecessor regarding your recent article pertaining to the Pickering Lands and general aviation. Please accept my apology for the delay in replying.

The Government agrees that general aviation is an important sector in Canada. Transport Canada's priorities are to promote the continued effectiveness and efficiency of federal air policy in maximizing the air transportation sector's contribution to Canada's economic prosperity and the needs of Canadians, while retaining the highest possible standards of safety, security and environmental performance.

Transport Canada is proceeding with developing a land use and management strategy for the Pickering Lands. No decision has been made as to what type of airport will be located on the Pickering Lands. Transport Canada will continue to monitor aviation demand and capacity and will re-examine the situation in due course to inform any decision in this regard. All options would be considered, and any future decisions will take into consideration the interests and needs of regional stakeholders, such as you, expressed during the engagement/consultation activities that will take place over the coming months and years.

For your ease of reference, Transport Canada has an online feedback form through which the Department is receiving public input. A link to the form can be found at the following website: <http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/ontario/pickering-menu-1362.htm> .

Thank you for sharing your views.

The Honourable Lisa Raitt, P.C., M.P.

Minister of Transport

### *COPA response to Minister Raitt email*

Unfortunately, the link to which you refer does not provide any feedback form. There is one mentioned on this page but it leads back to the main Pickering page. It appears that the feedback form has been removed. In any event, when the form was there, I did provide feedback.

Your response implies that at some point in the future a plan will be developed. Although I am thankful that you are committing to consulting with us, the need for a plan for GA in the GTA is more urgent than the anticipated timeframe when an airport may be develop at Pickering to meet capacity issues at Pearson.

I reiterate my concerns from the article I pointed you at previously:

“Unfortunately, with Buttonville slated to close in the next year or two (no date has been set), no development of an airport until the 2027-2037 timeframe will leave a significant void in the GTA.

“COPA has been advocating the feds to develop a plan for GA in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) for many years, not only in light of the closing of Buttonville but also the ongoing issues at the Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport (CYTZ) where GA has been systematically driven out over a period of years. We have also advocated for development of a GA policy to set the

framework for determining what Canada should do to provide a sustainable sector of aviation from which our airline system is fed.

And we have advocated for a review of the National Airports Policy

<http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/programs/airports-policy-menu-71.htm> , which to a large extent abandoned smaller airports, leaving them to the whim of local governments with non-aviation agendas.

“In copying the Transport Minister on this article, I renewed our ongoing concerns regarding the Pickering Lands Needs Assessment Study and its assumptions about GA in the GTA as well as expressing our desire to be consulted in the planning for the airport so that the demand for another GA airport in the GTAA, as confirmed by the COPA review, can be fulfilled.”

Your response does not address the near term need for a replacement airport for Buttonville and the effort at Billy Bishop to squeeze GA out and it says nothing about our position that a review of the National Airports Policy is required. I again urge you to study and take action much earlier than would be the case to address capacity issues at Pearson.

Mr. Kevin Psutka

President and Chief Executive Officer

Canadian Owners and Pilots Association