

Minister's response on Waterville airport closure falls short

By Kevin Psutka, COPA president and CEO

The Minister's letter, distancing the province from aviation, is no surprise. The National Airports Policy is achieving its goal - to reduce the number of airports in Canada. "Much of the Canadian transportation system is overbuilt: 94 per cent of all air passengers and cargo use only 26 of 726 airports" and "Each community will be in a position to determine the future role of its airport." The Feds have walked away, the provinces are remaining clear, except where it is in a politician's interest as it was with the former Premier who was in favour of offering the airport as a sacrificial lamb, and as a consequence the national air transportation system is being destroyed.

Waterville is strategically located between Digby and Debert. It should not be permitted to be closed without an alternative in place, but local politicians who have no responsibility for a national network of airports would not understand this. With only self-interest groups like COPA and airport stakeholders doing the advocating, it is an uphill battle. Perhaps when the pilot and mechanic supply reaches a crisis stage someone in a position to do something will take action to review the National Airports Policy with a view to maintaining an adequate network of airports. In the meantime, we will continue the fight to keep this airport open, including employing our Freedom to Fly Fund to pursue all legal channels. But we can only do so much. A federal presence is needed to ensure that an airport remains in the area.

I encourage area pilots and aviation enthusiasts to attend the fly-in at Waterville airport on 31 May (rain date 1 June) to show your support for the airport.



May 31, Waterville, NS (CCW3): [Annapolis Valley Flying Association](#) (AVFA)/COPA Flight 147's Apple Blossom Fly-In. Come to the beautiful Annapolis Valley. Light breakfast available from 8 a.m. until 10 a.m. and hot dogs and hamburgers available from 12 noon to 2 p.m. Rain Date – Sunday June 1st. Pilots meeting at 9 a.m. Join us for Apple Blossom Fly-Over starting at 9:30 a.m. For more information please phone 902-538-7116.