

January 12, 2024

Honourable Pablo Rodriguez, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Transport  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6  
[pablo.rodriguez@parl.gc.ca](mailto:pablo.rodriguez@parl.gc.ca)

Dear Minister Rodriguez,

On behalf of the Council of Atlantic Premiers, I am writing you regarding the proposed changes to the Air Passenger Protection Regulations under the *Canada Transportation Act* and the impact they may have on air connectivity in Atlantic Canada.

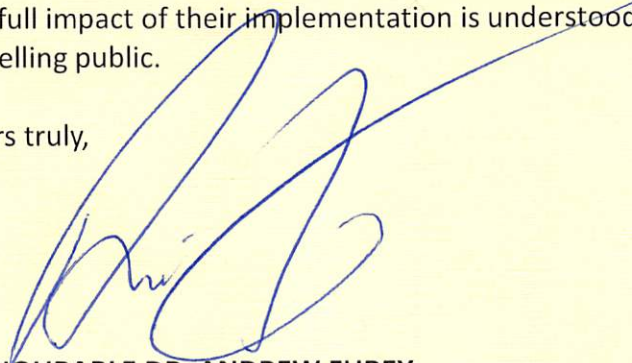
Air passenger travel is a critical transportation mode and is vital to economic growth, development, and sustainability in the Atlantic region. The airline industry has made considerable recovery efforts following the COVID-19 pandemic, however, they continue to face challenges, including reduced aircraft capacity, labour shortages, and market fluctuations. These challenges have affected the quality of air travel for passengers, including reduced seat capacity and connectivity; travel disruptions; and delays; and increased costs. Atlantic Premiers recognize the impact of these challenges on air travelers, the importance of respecting passenger rights, and the need to find viable solutions. However, we are concerned the proposed changes to Regulations could further add to challenges being faced by the airline industry and, consequently, negatively impact efforts to add capacity for passengers in regional markets.

We understand that some of the proposed changes could include compensation for delays caused by unplanned mechanical events and the requirement for passengers to be re-booked within 9 hours in case of a flight disruption. While these and other proposed changes are intended to protect passengers and improve air travel quality in Canada, they are particularly challenging in the context of servicing passengers in regional markets and do not recognize the distinct issues associated with flight frequency and availability in smaller market centres.

We are concerned that the proposed regulatory changes are likely to mean even further increased costs for Atlantic residents as airlines look to recoup the costs of regulatory compliance. It may also result in airlines becoming hesitant to continue, resume or provide service to regional markets, ultimately limiting regional air accessibility for passengers.

The Atlantic Provinces and the federal government have recently established an Air Access Working Group. It is important that the proposed changes to the Air Passenger Protection Regulations be fully considered in that work. We respectfully request that the process for adopting these new regulations be reconsidered to allow for further consultations to ensure the full impact of their implementation is understood by governments, carriers, and the travelling public.

Yours truly,



**HONOURABLE DR. ANDREW FUREY**  
Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador  
Chair, Council of Atlantic Premiers

cc: Honourable Dennis King, Premier of Prince Edward Island  
Honourable Tim Houston, Premier of Nova Scotia  
Honourable Blaine Higgs, Premier of New Brunswick  
France Pégeot, Chair and CEO, Canadian Transportation Agency  
Honourable Soraya Martinez Ferrada, Minister of Tourism