

For Immediate Release

Security screening improvements, rent relief, infrastructure funding, airports' key asks of government for budget 2018

Halifax (October 17, 2017) – The House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance heard today in Halifax that there is a need to work together to improve the system for security screening in Canada; that smaller airports in Atlantic Canada are in need of infrastructure assistance; and, that the federal government needs to change its policies on the rent it collects from airports.

Three priorities for the region's airports were described in a presentation to the committee by the Atlantic Canada Airports Association as part of the pre-budget consultation process in advance of the 2018 federal budget.

"Air travel in Atlantic Canada has been growing, and this growth is supporting tourism and trade in the region," says Joyce Carter, president of the association and president and CEO of Halifax International Airport Authority. "But the growth has also meant longer wait times during peak periods at security screening at a number of airports across the country." She continued, "We must improve the security screening experience in Canada, by moving forward with innovation and better matching resources to the growing demand. The efficient movement of goods and people is essential to the productivity and competitiveness of Canadians and business."

Airports across Canada were privatized by the federal government beginning in 1992. Some were divested entirely to communities, while others were divested, but remained on federal land. These airports are run by community not-for-profit authorities, who pay rent to the federal government.

"The federal government collects more than \$344 million a year in rent from Canada's airports," says Monette Pasher, executive director of Atlantic Canada Airports Association. "A small fraction of that, about 10 per cent, goes back as infrastructure funding support through the Airports Capital Assistance Program. But more rent monies need to flow back into the system to support smaller airports."

The Atlantic Canada Airports Association is also proposing that the federal government eliminate rent payments for all airports with less than 3-million passengers annually, and that rent charges for larger airports be capped.

"We need to stop the upward trajectory of airport rent," noted Pasher. "We are competing in a global economy and we must be globally competitive. This is currently

not the case, as Canada is one in only a handful of countries in the world today that collects rent from airports.” She continued, “Reducing airport costs and charges will stimulate growth and our economy.”

Atlantic Canada’s Airports also thanked the federal government for creating a National Transportation and Trade Corridor Initiative (TTCI) that will enable all National Airport System (NAS) Airports to apply for funding assistance for important infrastructure upgrades in the region.

- 30 -

About the Atlantic Canada Airports Association

The ACAA represents 12 airports in Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. The region’s airports move nearly 8 million passengers and approximately 60,000 metric tons of cargo annually and account for over 28,000 jobs in the region. Atlantic Canada’s airports are significant economic generators with passenger and cargo traffic generating over \$4.4 billion annually into the Atlantic Canada economy.

Media Inquiries:

Monette Pasher, Executive Director, Atlantic Canada Airport Association

Cell: (902) 802-5651 Email: Monette@acairports.ca