

For Immediate Release

New Brunswick customers driving to US border airports for cheaper airfares

Fredericton, NB (May 31st, 2012) – Atlantic Canada’s Airport CEO’s are meeting in Fredericton today to discuss issues affecting aviation competitiveness in the region.

“On the top of our agenda is the customers New Brunswick airports are losing to US airports,” stated Keith Collins, President of the Atlantic Canada Airports Association.

Collins continued, “New Brunswick’s airports are losing 50% of their transborder market to US airports.” This is part of a growing national issue that has ballooned to nearly 5 million Canadian passengers that are departing from US border airports in 2011.”

Canadian Airports Council’s recent study showed the leakage of Canadian passengers to US border airports as a significant issue. Approximately 5 million passengers are choosing to fly from US border airports and this relates to an economic loss of \$1.3 billion in Canadian GDP and over \$200 million in lost tax revenue for Canadians.

Bernie LeBlanc, CEO of the Saint John Airport Authority stated, “The total ticket cost per passenger is notably higher out of a Canadian airport compared to a US airport. Included in the additional cost in Canada are the Air Travellers Security Charge, Harmonized Sales Tax, the hidden cost of airport rent paid by airports to the federal government and the navigation and airport improvement fees paid to fund infrastructure.”

LeBlanc continued, “Government transferred the airports over a decade ago to local authorities with the idea that they would be self sufficient. Most have achieved this; airports have flourished under local operation to create a modern system that supports aviation and our community’s economic agendas. But it is clear now that we have become less cost competitive than our neighbours across the border. We want to work together with government and airlines to create a plan to reduce aviation costs in Canada.”

About the Atlantic Canada Airports Association

The ACAA represents 14 airports in Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. ACAA provides a collective voice for its member airports to undertake collaborative action on policy issues affecting our airports and communities. Member airports are significant economic generators with passenger and cargo traffic generating over \$2.6 billion into the economy annually. The regions airports move 6.6 million passenger and over 55,000 tons of cargo and account for over \$560 million in wages.

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