

May 26, 2018

Dear Sir or Madam:

Aviation serves a variety of crucial roles to the Canadian economy through safely and efficiently transporting Canadians and visitors, moving cargo, and supplying a vital lifeline to northern and remote communities. In fact, Canada has the third largest aerospace sector in the world generating \$29.8B in annual revenues, 211,000 direct and indirect jobs, and 5% of jobs in the North¹.

However, the Canadian pilot supply is facing a variety of critical challenges. The global air transport industry will double the number of aircraft and amount of passenger traffic by 2036. This will require 620,000 new pilots to fly large commercial aircraft internationally. Eighty percent of these new pilots have yet to begin training, emphasizing the need and importance of the pilot training sector on a global scale².

Canada has an excellent infrastructure for flight education, unlike many countries where airspace is heavily restricted. Domestically, Canadian flight schools produce about 1,200 new commercial pilots each year. Considering international students, and international entities that purchase Canadian flight training units to serve their home markets, only about 500 new pilots join the Canadian aviation industry each year. Canada will need 7,000 to 10,000³ new pilots by 2025, resulting in a projected shortage of at least 3,000 pilots⁴.

Half of flight operators state that finding qualified pilots is a significant challenge with regional airlines reporting flight cancellations due to lack of flight crew in the busy summer months. This problem will significantly worsen in the coming years, more broadly affecting the travelling Canadian public, unless actions are taken.

Pilot Pathway

The traditional pathway to becoming a pilot in Canada involves earning licenses and ratings that cost approximately \$75,000 (yet can climb to over \$150,000 with tuition and other student costs). Most flight students acquire substantial bank loans to cover these expenses. It is common to see high rates of attrition in flight programs related to lack of financing.

Newly graduated pilots traditionally completed an *'hours building'* phase of their career, working as a flight instructor or supporting northern/speciality operations. Wages for these positions are quite low. After 2-3 years, they had sufficient experience to apply for higher-paid and desirable pilot positions in airlines or corporate aviation.

In recent years, the pilot shortage has reduced or eliminated the *'hours building'* phase of a pilot's career, as regional airlines are increasingly recruiting students directly into airline pilot positions. Today, flight instructors only teach 4-6 months, creating a shortage compromising instructional quality and the industry's throughput of the next generation of aviators both domestically and internationally⁵. Likewise, many northern communities rely on air transportation for vital supplies and equipment, yet fewer aviators are choosing this type of flying in favour of positions with higher pay or in urban areas. Overall, growth in aviation has resulted in critical threats, including a scarcity of pilots to support flight instruction and operations that serve remote and northern communities.



Actions for a Sustainable Future

To support a sustainable future for the Canadian air transport industry, federal assistance is required. We request consideration of the following:

- **Federal student loans** to support Canadians who wish to earn pilot licenses, to increase the supply of Canadian aviators,
- Federal student **loan forgiveness** for pilots who serve a period of time as a flight instructor or pilot serving northern areas – ensuring that growth in the air transport market does not sacrifice the training sector nor northern communities. *Note: A similar program is in place for medical professionals serving remote regions⁶,*
- As only 7% of Canadian pilots are women⁷ and even fewer are of Indigenous descent, we request special financial assistance to **achieve gender parity and support minorities** within the aviation sector.

Canada has a long and proud aviation history, recognized internationally as a ‘*State of chief importance in air transport*’⁸. We appreciate your consideration to ensure a sustainable future for this sector, which is vital to our Canadian economy and way of life.

Sincerely,



Dr. Suzanne Kearns

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¹ Transport Canada. (2018). Government of Canada marks National Aviation Day 2018. Retrieved May 17, 2018, from <https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/government-of-canada-marks-national-aviation-day-2018-674860173.html>

² Secretary General, International Civil Aviation Organization. (2018). Fang Liu, Head of ICAO: 620,000 pilots will be needed by 2036. Montreal: Conseil des relations internationales de Montreal (CORIM). Retrieved May 17, 2018, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ca1mSpS-99k>

³ Note: 7,000 estimate assumes existing fatigue rules. 10,000 estimate is based upon the proposed fatigue regulations being implemented.

⁴ CCAA. (2018). *Labour Market Information Report: Aviation and Aerospace Industries*. Ottawa: Canadian Council for Aviation and Aerospace.

⁵ Van Dam, A. (2018, May 21). Pilot-hungry airlines are raiding flight schools — creating a shortage of instructors to train the next generation. Retrieved from The Washington Post: https://wapo.st/2wZJny2?tid=ss_mail_amp

⁶ Government of Canada. (2016). *Apply for Canada Student Loan forgiveness for family doctors and nurses*. Retrieved May 17, 2018, from <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/education/student-loan-forgiveness.html>

⁷ CCAA. (2018). *Labour Market Information Report: Aviation and Aerospace Industries*. Ottawa: Canadian Council for Aviation and Aerospace.

⁸ ICAO. (2016). Council States 2016-2019. Retrieved May 17, 2018, from <https://www.icao.int/about-icao/Council/Pages/council-states-2016-2019.aspx>

