



# CFPA-APFC

**Canadian Federal Pilots Association  
Association des Pilotes Fédéraux du Canada**

June 7, 2006

The Honourable Lawrence Cannon,  
Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities  
Transport Canada  
Tower C, Place de Ville, 330 Sparks Street  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0N5

Dear Mr. Cannon;

Re: CBAAC No. 250 – Cessation of Transport Canada Conducting Pilot Proficiency Checks

I had the pleasure of meeting with your colleague, the Hon. John Baird, at an informal meeting he hosted for the heads of Bargaining Agents some time ago. While expressing some of the concerns of our membership to him, he spoke very highly of you, and recommended that I make contact with you.

The Canadian Federal Pilots Association is the organization that represents the approximately 350 airplane and helicopter pilots employed by Transport Canada as Civil Aviation Inspectors (CAI).

Historically, CAIs have had, among their core responsibilities, the performance of Pilot Proficiency Checks (PPC) on pilots employed in the aviation industry. This process has been an essential component of Transport Canada's independent regulatory presence in the Canadian Aviation Industry, and has been an important contributing factor toward the high level of standards and safety for which the Canadian Aviation Industry is quite properly recognized.

The members of this Association strongly disagree with Transport Canada's stated objective of downloading to the industry this important component of Transport Canada's historical regulatory mandate. To be clear, this new initiative gives rise to the spectre that commercial operators will soon hold virtually the entire responsibility for checking the proficiency of their own pilots.

The ability of the State to effectively supervise and control commercial air transport operations in the public interest depends upon the competence of the civil aviation inspectorate. To effectively fulfil its responsibilities, the civil aviation inspectorate must be properly organized and staffed with qualified personnel capable of accomplishing a wide range of inspection activities. Canada is the only G7 country to fully delegate the conduct of PPCs to industry.

Transport Canada Civil Aviation states that it is moving towards finding more effective and efficient ways of using the personnel available in the future, to maintain, improve, and monitor the safety framework, to permit the highest level of safety performance possible in the industry. The department maintains that this is necessary because the current safety framework may not

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Suite 330, 130 Slater Street  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6E2  
Tel: (613) 230-5476  
Fax: (613) 230-2668  
E-mail: [cfpa@cfpa-apfc.ca](mailto:cfpa@cfpa-apfc.ca)

130, rue Slater, pièce 330  
Ottawa (Ontario) K1P 6E2  
Tél.: (613) 230-5476  
Télééc. : (613) 230-2668  
web site: [www.cfpa-apfc.ca](http://www.cfpa-apfc.ca)

be sustainable due to demographic projections indicating limited and varying availability of qualified personnel in the future. This plan of action assumes that Transport Canada will be unable or unwilling to compete for qualified personnel to oversee the system from a regulatory perspective and that delegation of the department's historical responsibilities back to the industry is the only alternative. Transport Canada's present direction is gambling with long established procedures that have provided Canada with its enviable aviation safety record.

Additionally, the new direction and requirement for Safety Management Systems (SMS) has no proven track record within aviation, particularly with respect to small and midsize air operators. The Australian experience with SMS has not been as successful as one would be led to believe. In spite of the good intentions of all concerned, this type of action effectively results in self-regulation of the air operator. Such an arrangement is not in the best interest of the traveling public nor does it ensure a high level of public confidence in the National Transportation System.

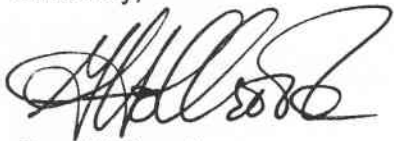
We see at least two dangers in the proposed approach:

1. The abdication of Transport Canada's role in the Pilot Proficiency Check process means the outright loss of neutral and independent oversight. In our view, it is only an independent body like Transport Canada that can be in a position to provide the necessary objectivity to ensure that the safety of the flying public remains the governing criterion, and that the financial pressures faced by industry operators are not allowed to supplant safety as the governing benchmark.
2. Secondly, the Association is of the view that Transport Canada's departure from the field guarantees a loss of consistency. While some operators may continue to meet or exceed the standards that Transport Canada would otherwise impose upon them, that will not necessarily be the case for all operators. The loss of uniform and independent oversight will, of necessity, result in widely diverging levels of compliance.

In summary, the twin goals of independence and consistency should, on their own, justify the continuation of Transport Canada's practice of taking responsibility for the performance of Pilot Proficiency Checks. The stakes are high here. Make no mistake about the fact that the proposed plan of action will have serious and direct consequences on the level of safety within the Canadian Aviation Industry.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you at your convenience, and to review any of the issues addressed in this letter in greater detail.

Sincerely,



Greg Holbrook  
National Chairman  
Canadian Federal Pilots Association