

Office of the Minister of Transport,  
Infrastructure and Communities



Cabinet du ministre des Transports,  
de l'Infrastructure et des Collectivités

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Ottawa, Canada K1A 0N5

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Mr. Greg Holbrook  
National Chairman  
Canadian Federal Pilots Association  
330-130 Slater Street  
Ottawa ON K1P 6E2

Dear Mr. Holbrook:

This is further to my letter of June 30, 2006, which was in response to your correspondence of June 7, 2006, to the Honourable Lawrence Cannon, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, regarding the cessation of pilot proficiency checks (PPCs) by Transport Canada. The Minister has asked me to provide the following comments on his behalf.

At the outset, please be assured that Transport Canada's main priorities are safety and security. The department's mission is to develop and administer policies, regulations and programs for a safe, secure and efficient transportation system. In this regard, two departmental reports have been key to improving upon the already high level of aviation safety in Canada. *Flight 2005 – A Civil Aviation Safety Framework for Canada* outlines a new way to manage safety risks in civil aviation with the introduction of safety management systems (SMS). *Flight 2010 – A Strategic Plan for Civil Aviation* outlines the plan for Canada's aviation safety program in the years ahead. I should add that the members of the Canadian Federal Pilots Association (CFPA) have been instrumental in setting the aviation safety bar as high as it is currently set.

Through the implementation of the SMS, inspectors will move from a direct intervention role to a systems approach where intervention will occur in a more effective manner, in partnership with the company involved, only when required to maintain safety. Using a systems approach such as the SMS, opportunities for improvement in all facets of line operations and pilot training will permit companies to identify opportunities for improvement and intervene at an earlier stage in the process. As well, such an approach provides operators the opportunity to immediately correct deficiencies rather than waiting for Transport Canada to identify them.

The PPC has been an essential component of Transport Canada's regulatory presence and an important contributing factor toward safety in the Canadian aviation industry. It is important to keep in mind that, as Transport Canada moves toward implementing a systems approach in safety oversight, the PPC becomes but one part of a multi-faceted approach to safety. I should also note that the CFPA's membership will be a key component to this new approach.

Transport Canada has been involved in programs such as the approved check pilot (ACP) program for many years; therefore, it is evident that these programs are not dependent upon SMS to function effectively. We do, however, expect to see improvements in these delegated programs as SMS principles take hold and are applied. As you may be aware, the ACP program allows a private or commercial air operator the opportunity to develop and maintain a pilot assessment program independent of the availability of Transport Canada civil aviation inspectors. This program effectively delegates the conduct of PPCs, required under Part VII of the Canadian Aviation Regulations, to industry pilots who have received special training and who have been approved as a check pilot through a letter of Ministerial authorization. ACPs are monitored by Transport Canada and evaluated as delegates of the Minister. ACPs that do not adhere to the guidelines will have their authority revoked.

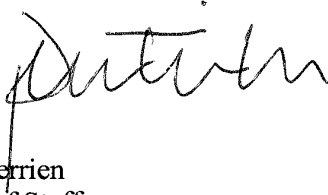
The continuing enhancement of data analysis tools, additional training for inspectors and delegated company pilots, and the implementation of a quality assurance program for the ACP program, are just a few of the initiatives currently under development that will be in place by December 31, 2007, when the industry will take on a more accountable role in training and assessing the proficiency of its pilots. The Commercial and Business Aviation Operational Standards Branch is finalizing an implementation plan to ensure that the transition is conducted in a manner that is not detrimental to safety. I should note that, where necessary as determined through risk indicators, Transport Canada will reserve the right to assess pilot proficiency as part of an enhanced monitoring program. However, any intervention at this level will be part of a tactical approach to managing a documented safety concern.

Transport Canada strongly supports *Flight 2010—A Strategic Plan for Civil Aviation* and is committed to ensuring that the people critical to its success have the necessary training and tools. The training of current inspectors and the recruitment of new inspectors are important elements to the success of the SMS.

The aviation sector is a vital component of Canada's transportation network, as well as the nation's economy. Please be assured that Minister Cannon is optimistic about its future. With an air safety regime that is among the best in the world, the federal government's commitment to safety and to promoting a stronger safety culture will help to maintain Canada's position as a world leader.

Once again, thank you for writing on this matter.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Terrien', written in a cursive style.

Paul Terrien  
Chief of Staff