



CFPA-APFC

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
26 APRIL 2018

Transport Canada failing Canadian air travellers

Ottawa – Transport Canada’s cuts to aviation safety oversight and reliance on “after-an-accident” inspections are likely increasing risk and leading to accidents in business aircraft operations, according to the Transportation Safety Board (TSB).

These are among the findings that have emerged from a TSB investigation into the causes of the October 2016 crash of a business aircraft that claimed the life of former Alberta Premier Jim Prentice and three others. The company that operated the aircraft involved had never been inspected by Transport Canada and the pilot was not trained and qualified to meet safety regulations. And, the required maintenance inspections had not been done on the aircraft.

“This report confirms Transport Canada is failing to do its job. Every air traveller should be concerned about these findings because safety oversight and inspection of Canada’s entire aviation system is suffering from similar neglect,” said Captain Greg McConnell, National Chair of the Canadian Federal Pilots Association.

More than five years ago, Transport Canada cut business aircraft like the plane involved in the Prentice crash from its planned safety oversight program. Only after an accident or a serious incident will Transport Canada conduct a “reactive” inspection of this class of aircraft. Several other sectors, including airports, heliports, and aircraft involved in dangerous aerial work have all been cut from TC’s oversight program as well.

“Across the board, Transport Canada does ten “after-an-accident” inspections for every single preventive inspection. At the same time, inspections of airlines are increasingly superficial in an attempt by Transport Canada to look like it is doing more than it actually is to ensure Canadians are safe when they fly. Our safety blanket is getting thinner and thinner,” McConnell said.

This trend is almost certain to continue because the federal government is planning further cuts to Transport Canada’s aviation safety budget. According to forecasts published by the Government of Canada, spending on aviation safety will decline 13% next year, compared to spending in 2012 (before inflation).

“It is a fact long established by TSB investigators that Transport Canada’s weak safety oversight program allows unsafe practices to persist in aviation. Today’s report confirms Transport Canada’s neglect of aviation safety continues. I share the concern ordinary travellers might have about these troubling findings. ” McConnell said.

Two months ago the TSB reported a significant spike in accidents and incidents involving commercial airlines, commuter aircraft and air taxis last year. For everyone who relies on commercial airlines, large and small, this is an ominous sign of what may lie ahead.

“These data, especially the sharp increase in incidents, tell me a major accident is coming unless Transport Canada immediately beefs up its safety oversight and inspection program,” Captain McConnell said.

The Canadian Federal Pilots Association represents licenced pilots who work for Transport Canada as inspectors and at the Transportation Safety Board.

-30-

For information:

Trevor Thompson
613-315-7355
trevor@thompsoncom.ca

neglect