

May 31, 2022

Omar Alghabra

Minister of Transport

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Randy Boissonnault

Minister of Tourism

randy.boissonnault@parl.gc.ca

Re: Support required for Canadian airports

Minister Alghabra and Minister Boissonnault

The Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce writes regarding the viability of Canadian airports and the significant contributions they make to the national economy and individual communities such as ours.

In the case of the Okanagan Valley in B.C.'s Interior, Kelowna International Airport (YLW) provides a gateway for tourists and investors to our region while local businesses can connect their products and services with the global marketplace. Prior to the pandemic, YLW was responsible for 4,545 jobs and an economic output of \$789 million. Covid-19, obviously, disrupted activity but passenger numbers are climbing and a record summer for travel is expected.

But even with the sudden surge in domestic travel, Canadian airports continue to struggle financially, and our Chamber endorses the recent call for action from the Canadian Chamber of Commerce on airports. Specifically, we request that your Government:

- Review all Covid-19 regulations, including those for international travellers, and remove all restrictions no longer needed;
- Employ additional Canadian Air Transport Security Authority and passport workers to reduce the wait time passengers experience at airport security and at passport offices;

- Follow the lead of other nations, including the U.S., and embrace the Trusted Traveller program, which provides a speedier security clearance process for low-risk travellers;
- Provide funding for infrastructure and technology improvement as many airports placed projects on hold because of a pandemic decrease in revenue. These initiatives will prepare airports to welcome increased air travel in the future.

On behalf of our 600-plus members, we urge your Government to take immediate steps that recognize the importance airports and air travel play in communities across Canada.

If there is any further information that we can provide, please contact us. Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Robin Cardew
President
Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce

Cc. Mel Arnold, North Okanagan-Shuswap MP
Kelowna International Airport
Okanagan Indian Band Chief & Council
City of Vernon Mayor & Council
District of Coldstream Mayor & Council
Regional District of North Okanagan Board of Directors
City of Kelowna Mayor & Council
Tourism Vernon
Canadian Chamber of Commerce
Okanagan-Shuswap Chambers of Commerce