



## LOOKING FORWARD TO IMPROVED STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS

The past year was particularly difficult in terms of industry's relations with Transport Canada. The long and frustrating saga of revisiting Flight and Duty Time regulations came to an extremely disappointing and discouraging conclusion with the publication in Canada Gazette II of the new regulations. Industry had almost unanimously denounced this proposed set of regulations as extremely costly, impractical to implement, detrimental to the quality of air services offered in Canada, and resulting in a greater threat to safety.

ATAC and most other industry stakeholders were dismayed by the fact that our often-repeated serious concerns were not addressed. The laborious implementation of the new regulations already amply demonstrate that our input should have been awarded due consideration. Our concerns were also voiced numerous times by members of the Government Caucus who, like us, wanted to implement changes to existing regulations that would have minimal impact on cost and level of service to Canadians, particularly to those in northern, indigenous and remote regions.

Rather than stand alone at his press conference on the publication of the regulation, the Minister chose to be accompanied by one party pushing for these regulations. Obviously, no Canadian air carrier would publicly endorse this terribly flawed set of regulations, had they been invited, but why create an affront by having one of the parties present at all?

This serious faux-pas of casting the carriers as uncooperative partners was not an isolated incident but seemingly a pattern in that it was repeated a few days later at the press conference announcing the publication

of the proposed new Passenger Protection regulations. Once again, the Minister chose to exclude the industry partners expected to comply to these regulations, namely the air carriers, and postured with a consumer advocacy group. Stakeholders expect ministers to show undeniable impartiality when speaking on issues that affect all stakeholders.

Hopefully, the new year will cast a web of wisdom to all aviation stakeholders, including the regulator, as we have many highly contentious issues of great consequence to our industry that are on the agenda for this year. In addition to the issue of Passenger Rights, which needs a lot of clarification and work to make it viable, the list also includes the extremely politically sensitive issue of the Carbon Tax.

The Transport Minister made everyone gasp when he said in his testimony this fall before the Standing House Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities that no one in the air transport industry had indicated to him that they opposed the Carbon Tax. Either the Minister misspoke, or he hadn't read the numerous emails and comments from industry opposing this tax which will seriously jeopardize our competitiveness with US carriers. Let's just hope that the concept of alternate facts is not also invading our debates.

We would welcome, as always, a more collaborative, rather than confrontational, approach in addressing the many important issues that must be dealt with before the fall election. ATAC is soon to celebrate its 85th Anniversary and in all those years, we have rarely, if ever, had to go beyond the Minister and the Deputy Minister to get our concerns heard and practical solutions found. Our industry has always been open to dialogue, and

that is how over the years we have managed to resolve so many complex issues with huge stakes. Our number one wish for 2019 is for stakeholders to once again be accorded due respect and consideration.

ATAC wishes everyone a most prosperous and safe New Year.

**John McKenna**  
President and CEO  
Air Transport Association of Canada

### ATAC IS PROUD TO WELCOME THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS



**DRONE DELIVERY CANADA**  
VAUGHAN, ONTARIO



**THE BENEFITS TRUST**  
VAUGHAN, ONTARIO



BURLINGTON, ONTARIO



SEATTLE, WASHINGTON



**WETASKIWIN AIR SERVICES DBA  
ABSOLUTE AVIATION**  
WETASKIWIN, ALBERTA