

February 20, 2009

Hon. Paul Oram, M.H.A.
Minister of Business
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
P.O. Box 8700
St. John's, NL A1B 4J6

Dear Minister Oram:

It is with great pleasure and great interest that the St. John's Board of Trade noted the release of the study of air transportation for our province just 10 days ago. On behalf of the Board and its membership, I would like to congratulate you for this important step forward and thank you for undertaking the work.

The position of the St. John's Board of Trade is that a community approach will be the most beneficial to enhancing air access in Newfoundland and Labrador. The study notes that the community has to make a clear business case to airlines to serve our province; we hold this to be true and we will be a part of this community. We encourage you to take this position and to take action to engage community stakeholders in business, tourism, municipal governments, airport authorities and air-related industries.

The report also notes that airlines are attracted to places which have key air-related industries that help drive economic development of the destination. Tourism and aerospace/defence are such industries.

In the context of on-going budget discussions within the provincial government, the Board encourages you to look at the broad context of integrating tourism and aerospace/defence support and stimulus with air access. This could help build an indisputable economic and business case to take to airlines to service Newfoundlanders and Labradorians in a more positive manner for the long term.

Air access is one of the top advocacy issues for the St. John's Board of Trade for 2009 because it means so much in terms of economic development and business potential for our members. We are, of course, all citizens of this city and province and want to see enhanced air access so that all parts of the community can benefit. On the Board's behalf, I want to offer our support on this matter and our expertise in subsequent meetings and consultations.

The St. John's Board of Trade is anxious to act on this matter, and to do so with community stakeholders who can help the province build a case for airlines. I look forward to our work together.

Sincerely,

Bruce Templeton
Chair

c.c. Hon. Shawn Skinner, Hon. Clyde Jackman, Hon. Dianne Whalen