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November 12, 2014

Support of brief submitted by Canadian Owners and Pilots Association to the Standing Committee of Finance regarding Bill C-43 Part 4 Division 2 Sections 143, 144 Amendments to the Aeronautics Act

To: The Chairs and Clerks of – the House Finance Committee and Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, and the Senate Standing Committee on National Finance and the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications

The Saskatchewan Aviation Council (SAC) does not object to the requirement for proponents of aerodrome development to consult. SAC is of the opinion though that there should also be a requirement to consult for proponents of land uses and other interfering activities that may affect aviation safety and use of aerodromes.

The amendment to the Aeronautics Act that appeared as part of Bill C-43 came as a complete surprise to the aviation industry. It appears no one was consulted on this amendment.

The SAC is concerned that there was no consultation on the amendment to the Aeronautics Act, that the amendment gives broad sweeping powers to the Minister to prohibit aerodrome development and changes to the operation of an aerodrome and is exempt from the Statutory Instruments Act. SAC is also concerned that this amendment is one-sided in that there is no requirement to consult or prohibitions considered on land uses that may affect aviation safety around most of the aerodromes in Canada.

“Public interest” is not defined, and the arbitrary power of the Minister is an open invitation for local interest groups to pressure politicians to act, likely in a manner detrimental to aerodrome development or changes that in fact may be truly in “the public interest”.

Given the importance of this matter concerning the future of the Canadian air transportation system, and that the amendment gives the Minister unilateral power to circumvent all the processes for consultation on aerodrome development, SAC requests that the amendment to the Act be returned to Transport Canada for further work with the industry.

SAC is in full support of the brief and the request to appear before the Standing Committee on Finance made by the Canadian Owners and Pilots Association (COPA).

Respectfully submitted,
Janet Keim
President