



March 11, 2024

Via email: [pablo.rodriquez@tc.gc.ca](mailto:pablo.rodriquez@tc.gc.ca)

The Honourable Pablo Rodriguez, MP  
Minister of Transport  
330 Sparks Street  
Ottawa ON K1A 0N5

**Re: Request for immediate action to protect YVR operations from buildings that interfere with federally controlled airspace and the safety of aviation operations**

Dear Minister,

As you may be aware the Business Council of British Columbia (BCBC) represents over 200 of B.C.'s largest employers. Our mission is to promote prosperity and sound public policy through informing, convening, and advocating.

We are writing to ask for your help on an important and urgent matter affecting Vancouver International Airport (YVR). Without your immediate action, the BCBC believes this issue will directly impact Canada's economy and the prosperity of all Canadians. Several recent buildings have "pierced" the federally controlled airspace above local communities near YVR. This has impacted flight approach procedures to YVR's north runway.

In the past, Canada's air navigation authority (NAV CANADA) has accommodated obstacles by rerouting flight paths. However, there are obvious limits to rerouting. We are aware that NAV CANADA has already twice redesigned flight paths in the last two years to circumvent new building developments in the City of Vancouver. This stopgap solution is simply not sustainable. We now need a solution that protects the north runway's viability.

We understand that YVR has been engaged with Transport Canada departmental officials for well over a year on this matter. YVR retained, at its own cost, the services of local land use consultants Rennie Intelligence to quantify potential future impacts. That work identified up to 80 proposed developments in the region that have the potential to interfere with airspace approaching YVR within just a few short years. This creates a situation where YVR may have to significantly reduce its arrival and departure capacity and even shut down flight operations for its north runway in low visibility conditions.

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YVR is a critical part of Canada's gateway to the Indo Pacific region. The airport handled 284,000 flights, 25 million passengers and 319,000 tonnes of cargo in 2023. Moreover, YVR is investing to grow its aviation cargo capacity, with financial assistance from Canada's National Trade Corridor Fund. The first phase of YVR's new air cargo facilities is currently under construction and will add \$20 billion to Canada's international trade potential. Businesses in the region depend on YVR for the transit of customers, staff and high-value, just-in-time goods.

The prospect of YVR having to shut down flight operations for one of its two main runways during periods of low visibility – in a region that sees about 150-200 days of rain annually and other periods of low visibility due to fog or wildfire smoke – would entail significant economic costs including losing international routes and reducing the ability to bring in cargo. For customers, this would likely result in higher costs, less choice, and more inconvenience.

We need clarity to protect the airport's north runway and give provincial governments, local municipalities, and property developers certainty about allowable building heights in relation to sea level and YVR's flight paths before projects are designed and underway. There are considerable costs involved in making changes after planning and construction has started, costs that are ultimately borne by new home buyers.

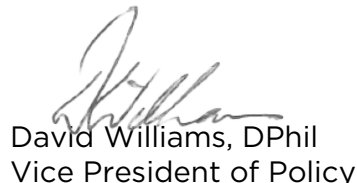
In our view, the Government of Canada must take clear and immediate action. While possible legislative and regulatory solutions are being clarified, we suggest you use your ministerial authority to issue an immediate Ministerial Directive requiring municipalities to check in with NAV CANADA and YVR before approving new proposed buildings that have the potential to pierce the federally controlled airspace in the vicinity of YVR.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Yours sincerely,



Laura Jones  
President and Chief Executive Officer



David Williams, DPhil  
Vice President of Policy

cc: Honourable Anita Anand, President of the Treasury Board  
Catherine Blewett, Secretary of the Treasury Board  
Arun Thangaraj, Deputy Minister, Transport Canada  
Wilson Miao, Member of Parliament (Richmond Centre)  
Honourable David Eby, Premier of British Columbia  
Honourable Rob Fleming, B.C. Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure  
Kaye Krishna, Deputy Minister, B.C. Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure  
Ken Sim, Mayor, City of Vancouver  
Mike Hurley, Mayor, City of Burnaby  
George Harvie, Board Chair, Metro Vancouver  
Tamara Vrooman, President & Chief Executive Officer, Vancouver Airport Authority  
Mike McNaney, VP and Chief External Affairs Officer, Vancouver Airport Authority