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Dear Prime Minister Carney,

On behalf of the IAM union - International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers Canada, I am writing to express our strong opposition to your government's decision to pursue long-term private concessions for the operation of Canada's largest airports.

The IAM represents thousands of workers across Canada's aviation and air transportation sectors. Our members work every day to keep Canada's aviation system safe, efficient and moving. We understand firsthand the importance of Canada's airports as critical national infrastructure and as major economic engines for communities across the country.

We are deeply concerned with your government's decision to open the operations of Toronto Pearson, Montréal-Trudeau, Vancouver International and Calgary International airports to private investors.

While your government has stated that the federal government will retain ownership of the underlying land and assets, transferring the operation of these airports to private investors is, in our view, privatization in substance. Long-term concessions give private interests control over critical public infrastructure with the expectation of generating financial returns.

Airports are not ordinary commercial assets. They are essential public infrastructure. They are gateways to our country, critical to our national economy, and fundamental to the movement of people and goods. Decisions about their operation must therefore be driven by the public interest, not by the expectations of private investors and shareholders.

We are particularly concerned about the potential consequences for Canadian workers and travellers.

Private operators will inevitably face pressure to generate returns on their investments. Experience in other jurisdictions demonstrates that when private capital is introduced into essential transportation infrastructure, there can be significant pressure to increase user fees, reduce operating costs and restructure or contract out work.

The government has suggested that private investment will improve efficiency, maintain affordability and generate capital for investment in other parts of Canada's aviation

infrastructure. Those objectives are worthy, but we do not believe that handing over the operation of our largest airports to private interests is the only, or necessarily the best, way to achieve them.

Canada already has a sophisticated airport system involving airport authorities, airlines, workers, governments and other stakeholders. There are opportunities to improve airport financing, infrastructure investment, governance and passenger affordability without placing the operation of critical national infrastructure under long-term private concessions.

We also believe that Canadian workers must have a meaningful voice in any discussion about the future of our airports. The people who operate, maintain, secure and support this infrastructure understand its challenges and opportunities better than most. They should not be treated as an afterthought in a process focused primarily on attracting investment.

The IAM has consistently advocated for strong public infrastructure, good union jobs and an aviation system that serves Canadians from coast to coast to coast. We will continue to defend those principles.

Prime Minister, before your government proceeds further down this path, I respectfully request a meeting with you and the appropriate members of your government to discuss the IAM's concerns and to hear directly from the workers who keep Canada's aviation system operating.

We are prepared to engage constructively and in good faith. However, we will also be clear: Canada's airports are critical public infrastructure, and decisions about their future must put the interests of Canadians, airport workers and the travelling public ahead of private financial returns.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,



David Chartrand
General Vice President – Canada
IAM Union