## \_\_\_\_>° L⊂し⊂▷°ん◁ Legislative Assembly of Nunavut



## Nunavut Maligaliurvia Assemblée législative du Nunavut

May 5, 2023

Ms. Lori Idlout, M.P. Member of Parliament for Nunavut House of Commons Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Mr. Dennis Patterson Senator for Nunavut Senate of Canada Ottawa, ON K1A 0A4

Dear Member Idlout and Senator Patterson:

I am writing to you in my capacity as the Member of the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut representing the constituency of Tununiq.

As you will be aware, the federal Minister of Transport recently announced the approval of new Terms and Conditions respecting the 2019 merger between Canadian North and First Air. The new Terms and Conditions are prescribed in the Schedule to the recently-approved *Order in Council 2023-0358*, a copy of which I am attaching for your ease of reference.

My office has received numerous concerns from residents of Pond Inlet concerning the deterioration of airline service in our region since the 2019 merger was approved.

Although I am aware of the role and jurisdiction of the federal Canadian Transportation Agency in respect to the administration of the *Air Passenger Protection Regulations*, many Nunavummiut cannot easily access such mechanisms to raise concerns regarding flight cancellations, space unavailability and scheduling issues. As you will both recognize, these operational issues also have a significant impact on the provision of essential medical travel to Nunavummiut.

I also note ongoing concerns regarding other airline-related matters under federal jurisdiction, including lengthy delays in the delivery of mail and other items to Canada Post's facility in Pond Inlet.

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The federal Minister's recent announcement of April 21, 2023, indicated that the new Terms and Conditions will "limit average annual regional fare increases for both passenger and cargo transportation to 25 percent within a calendar year." It is critical that the Nutrition North Canada Program respond effectively to developments that impact the cost of transporting food to remote communities in Nunavut.

Although I understand and recognize that the COVID-19 pandemic had an unavoidable impact on the global airline industry, and although I understand and recognize that serving the small population of the North poses significant economic challenges to carriers, I remain concerned that the lack of competition in this sector is not benefitting our constituents as airfares remain unaffordable for significant numbers of Nunavummiut. This situation is further exacerbated by the current economic climate of high inflation.

As you will recall, *Order in Council 2019-0805*, which was approved in June of 2019, provided that:

"The Merged Entity shall create an independent advisory board that shall ensure representation of stakeholders in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories. The advisory board shall have the mandate to report to the Minister of Transport on any issues regarding compliance with any term or condition of this schedule, the Confidential Implementation and Monitoring Agreement, and any anticompetitive behaviour by the Merged Entity. The Merged Entity shall be responsible for the provision of reasonable funding for the operation of the advisory board. The Minister of Transport shall nominate one member of the advisory board."

The recently-approved *Order in Council 2023-0358* eliminates reference to this board, and provides that:

"The Merged Entity shall provide the Monitor with access to its books and records and shall provide any other information required by the Monitor to provide the Minister with audited quarterly reports of the Merged Entity's compliance with the Terms and Conditions and the Amended and Restated Implementation and Monitoring Agreement. The Merged Entity shall provide to the Minister with all raw data required by the Minister in support of each Monitor's reporting, or as reasonably required for the Minister's administration of the Terms and Conditions and the Amended and Restated Implementation and Monitoring Agreement."

In the absence of an independent board, I strongly encourage both of you to work with your colleagues to provide oversight on this issue through such forums as the House of Commons Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and the Senate Standing Committee on Transport and Communications.

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I look forward to your replies.

Yours sincerely,

Karen Nutarak, MLA Tununiq

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c.c. The Honourable Omar Alghabra, P.C., M.P., Minister of Transport

The Honourable Dan Vandal, P.C., M.P. Minister of Northern Affairs

The Honourable Helena Jaczek, P.C., M.P., Minister responsible for Canada Post

The Honourable David Akeeagok, MLA, Minister of Economic Development and Transportation

The Honourable John Main, MLA, Minister of Health

His Worship Joshua Arreak, Mayor of Pond Inlet

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