

February 24, 2021

The Honourable Patty Hajdu, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Health
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

The Honourable Bill Blair, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Public Safety
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Ministers,

On behalf of Canada's business aviation community, I wish to draw your attention to an issue that requires urgent clarification and action.

Business aviation operators who are coming into Canada are reporting that there is a lack of consistency in what is considered to be essential travel when they arrive at the Canadian border. This has caused hardship for our operators and has been especially difficult for passengers and clients who are providing essential services in Canada.

By way of this letter, we urgently seek a consistent and fair set of rules applied at all the air borders open to international travel. We also ask that you reconsider the interpretation of essential services that some border agents are using, as it seems to contradict the intent of the rules that have been put in place to allow people to ensure the safety and reliability of critical infrastructure.

From our discussions with PHAC officials and in reviewing the information on the Public Safety webpage, *Guidance on Essential Services and Functions in Canada During the COVID-19 Pandemic*, we are of the view that travel by many individuals entering Canada qualify as performing essential services and functions and should be allowed into the country on that basis.

This applies to employees and employers in all of the identified sectors within the National Strategy for Critical Infrastructure. In addition, the description of employees needs to consider senior executives who are tasked with sensitive negotiations, direct supervision and oversight or other responsibilities that require their personal attendance.

The advice we were given by government officials was to pursue eligibility using Special Authorizations, which we undertook. Unfortunately, they were all rejected, even though we are confident that we met or exceeded the criteria as described.

We are now asking for the following considerations:

1. Could you please direct your officials to provide us with information on the proper way to proceed to avoid confusion and ensure a consistent and fair approach for essential travel prior to arrival at our ports of entry?

2. How can we ensure that all personnel whose travel is essential are included in the criteria? As mentioned earlier, this should also include supervisory or executive staff, depending on circumstances. While some of these are implied in your guidance material, there is still a lack of clarity that must be addressed, in fairness to employees and employers.
3. We ask that you work with the CBAA, business aviation's representative, to devise a prudent testing protocol that recognizes the best practices already deployed and permits our operators to conduct any required testing at the facilities we use across Canada.

Ministers Hajdu and Blair, as you know, business aviation has been providing essential services to Canadians long before the pandemic began. Today, with commercial access reduced by 90 percent of 2019 levels, our sector has become even more critical in delivering the people and goods needed to keep Canadians healthy, safe and secure.

We hope to work with your officials to be able to have the clarity needed in order to do our part to transport passengers critical to Canada's essential services and functions.

Yours sincerely,



Anthony Norejko
President and CEO

Cc: The Honorable Omar Alghabra, P.C., M.P. Minister of Transport