****

**Remarks to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities Study on Aviation Safety**

 ***May 11, 2017

For the Canadian Airports Council:***

***Daniel-Robert Gooch, President, Canadian Airports Council***

***Jennifer Sullivan, Director of Corporate Safety and Security, GTAA & Chair, CAC Security Committee***

**Daniel**

Chair, members: good morning.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today on a topic that is extremely important to airports, the screening of airport workers, or as we describe them in industry terms – “Non Passengers”. This has been a topic of significant discussion between industry and government in recent years as Transport Canada has taken steps to enhance the Canadian screening program.

My name is Daniel-Robert Gooch and I am the president of the Canadian Airports Council. Our association has 51 members representing more than 100 airports across Canada. They range in size from global hubs such as Toronto Pearson and Montréal Trudeau to much smaller airports such as North Bay or Sydney. I am pleased to be joined today by Jennifer Sullivan, Toronto Pearson’s, Director of Corporate Safety and Security and the Chair of the CAC’s Security Committee. Jennifer also serves as Vice-Chair of the Airports Council International World Standing Committee on Security so she can provide some perspective on the global context as well.

Canada's airports are managed and operated by local authorities on a not-for-profit basis. This means that any operating surplus they deliver gets reinvested into the airport and any increases in operating costs have to be passed on to airport users, including air travellers. While airports today pay more than $439 million a year in property and land taxes to federal and municipal governments, they have invested more than $22 billion in infrastructure since 1992 without taxpayer support.

In Canada screening of passengers, baggage and airport workers is the mandate of the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority – a crown corporation. While the focus of today’s session is on the screening of airport workers, we cannot tackle this topic effectively without discussing how CATSA is funded today overall.

While we have tremendous respect and support for the important work that CATSA does, funding for CATSA is the single biggest operational challenge airports face today. When the corporation was established in the aftermath of 9/11, government also created the Air Travellers Security Charge, a $7 to $25 levy applied to all airline tickets in Canada, designed to cover the costs of the entire aviation security screening system. With the ATSC, government collects more than enough money to fund the system. In fact, in fiscal year 2015-2016, the revenue from the ATSC was nearly $110 million more than was provided to CATSA to fulfil its mandate. However, passengers are forced to stand in longer and longer lines waiting to be screened.

Meanwhile, government has approached industry about potentially downloading the financial and operational responsibility for the screening of airport workers, their vehicles and belongings at an estimated cost to airports of $150 million a year. This is on top of more than $25 million a year in security costs that government has quietly transferred to airports since 2009. In the interests of providing value to travellers and improving transparency, it is our opinion that ATSC revenues should be fully dedicated to covering CATSA’s complete mandate. CATSA also needs greater flexibility to collaborate and innovate in how it runs a sustainable business. For example, with a couple of exceptions, CATSA has no ability to raise revenue from functions like training or supplemental services for airports.

For the past two years, the CAC and our partners in the air carrier community have worked toward a permanent funding solution for CATSA, one that can address all of the organization’s mandate. This is why airports were pleased with Transport Minister Garneau’s Transportation 2030 speech in Montreal last November, which made commitments to address many of the items outlined above.

Unfortunately, however, Budget 2017 failed not only to make any progress on these commitments. Most relevant to our appearance today, however, Budget 2017 delays a decision on how to handle and fund the screening of airport workers

It is important that we get this work back on track.

So that is the context. I will now turn it over to Jennifer for the specifics.

**Jennifer**

Thank you, Daniel.

Madame Chair, honourable members, I echo Daniel’s thanks to you for the opportunity to be here today.

The screening of airport workers, as mentioned, has been a focus for the CAC Security Committee in conjunction with Transport Canada and CATSA for several years. We worked very closely with our colleagues at Transport Canada to support their development of the enhanced non-passenger screening program that is now implemented at 16 airports across Canada. The changes to the program, which involved about $150 million in airport-funded infrastructure investments, keep Canada at pace with our international peers and in compliance with the requirements of the International Civil Aviation Organization.

As a result of the non-passenger screening program enhancements Canada has, what we believe to be, a robust system of screening. Through recurrent biographical screening via the Transportation Security Clearance (TSC) system, biometric identity verification provided by the Restricted Area Identity Card and airport access control systems, and physical screening through CATSA checkpoints we are verifying in real time that people accessing security sensitive areas of airports are who they say they are and through screening are determined not to be carrying prohibited items.

The enhanced program also provides Canada greater credibility with international partners. This has allowed Canada to enter into mutual recognition security agreements with our counterparts in Europe and the United States to eliminate the duplication of security screening for some transiting passengers. This in turn allows airports to offer more convenient and faster connection products for passengers in a globally competitive marketplace.

Though we have a strong system of regulations and practices, in the broader picture, we need all federal partners to contribute to its success. In particular, attention needs to be paid to the Transportation Security Clearance process, the foundational security check for all employees at airports with access to the restricted area. In 2012 processing of a TSC took 21 days for a new applicant and 11 days for a renewal. Today, new airport employees expect to wait six months.

Delays in processing the TSC mean growing numbers of employees at airports work on temporary passes – workers we know little about until that TSC comes through. While there are regulatory and operational mitigations in place that reduce risks, it does create logistical challenges and additional costs to airports. As such these challenges present an opportunity for a complete rethink of the process and program, which is something the CAC Security Committee has just created a working group to do.

So there are some structural challenges facing the security screening system at airports that impacts operational efficiency; however, we believe these can be fixed with the will of government.

We would be happy to take any questions.