



Union of Canadian Transportation Employees

response to

*“Pathways: Connecting Canada’s Transportation System
to the World”*

A review of the *Canada Transportation Act*

Introduction

The Union of Canadian Transportation Employees is the national union that represents members who work at Transport Canada, the Canadian Coast Guard (CCG), most pilotage authorities, Canadian Transportation Agency, and most federally-regulated airports. After the tabling of *“Pathways: Connecting Canada’s Transportation System to the World”* (the Report) before parliament last February, UCTE did an in-depth review of the proposed changes and recommendations to Canada’s transportation infrastructure. While there are many areas of the report that our members would support, there are still quite a few that causes concern.

Pilotage Authorities

The amalgamation of the four distinct Crown corporations into one entity has merit, especially when taking into consideration the establishment of a Northern Pilotage Authority. UCTE recommends that this new organization fall under the purview of the Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) who, as you know, is responsible for marine safety and security in Canadian waters. As the report suggests there already exists a connection between the pilotage authorities and CCG. Furthermore, the report recommends that CCG is *“uniquely positioned to take over all marine oversight including hydrographic and pilotage services.”*

Port Authorities

UCTE is against the recommendation to adopt a share-capital structure. Similar to airports, UCTE believes there would be no reason to risk privatizing these critical economic and transportation infrastructure assets.

The Canadian Coast Guard

Attached for your convenience, you will find UCTE policy papers with regards to the status of the CCG as well as the arming of the Coast Guard. You will note that these papers support the recommendations of:

“augmenting and clarifying the mandate of Coast Guard and giving it clear oversight and enforcement responsibilities for safety, security, and environmental protection in Canadian waters”; and while

“focusing on key activities such as search and rescue, environmental response, ice breaking, pilotage, navigation aids and chartering services, among others...”

As recognized by the report, none of this is achievable without the appropriate funding. UCTE fully supports the need for a *“clear plan for accelerated fleet renewal and services”*.

Although the report recommends that the CCG is placed within Transport Canada, UCTE believes the recommendation that it be given as a Separate Statutory Authority service agency status similar to Canada Revenue Agency or Parks Canada Agency, would give the CCG autonomy and flexibility to respond to all marine issues under their mandate. With this status change, the Commissioner of the Canadian Coast Guard would be given the equivalency of Deputy Minister status and the agency would remain within the Department of Fisheries and Oceans however the name of the Department would change to reflect that of the minister, ie Department of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard.

Airports

As opposed to the phasing out of airport rents, UCTE supports the need to review the extension of leases and rents for all airports. It is important to ensure the viability of small and mid-size airports which includes granting access to Capital Assistance Program as well as provincial funding.

Under the former *Airport Transfer Act*, there was a requirement for labour representation upon all airport boards. UCTE recommends that this recognition of labour as an important stakeholder with airports including be re-established with the codicil that the positions be appointed by the Canadian Labour Council District Labour Councils.

With these measures in place, there would be no reason to risk privatizing these critical economic and transportation infrastructure assets. UCTE strongly believes that not-for-profit status needs to remain in place for all airports.

The report speaks specifically about smaller airports in the North and proposes flexibility in the Civil Aviation Regulations (CARs) which UCTE opposes. UCTE is concerned that any amendment to CARs would not be specific to one jurisdiction or geographic area and would therefore, inadvertently, cause a weakening to the mandate of Transport Canada overall. We believe that the safety and security standards of all airport users' needs to be enforced equally across Canada. The proposed review of rents, leases, and access to other funding should also recognize the concerns regarding financial viability of smaller and mid-sized airports.

Canadian Transportation Agency

UCTE is opposed to the transfer of authorities to Canadian Transportation Agency. We believe that what is proposed falls directly within Transport Canada's mandate and responsibilities. The concern is that some of what is proposed would impinge on Transport Canada's authorities and therefore these changes would weaken Transport Canada's effectiveness.

Transportation Safety Board

It appears that the Transportation Safety Board (TSB) was not included in the Report. UCTE recognizes that the mandate of the Emmerson commission was to review the Canada Transport Act, we feel it was an oversight not to include the *Canadian Transportation Accident Investigation and Safety Board Act* which governs TSB.

Regardless of this, UCTE recommends that TSB be given the power to direct following an investigation as opposed to the power to recommend. This would make TSB investigations mandatory for compliance and allow TSB the authority to see recommendations for the improvement to transportation safety and security be implemented within a reasonable timeframe.

Conclusion

In general, UCTE supports some elements of the review however a further review of the specific issues listed above is needed. The creation of a Northern Pilotage authority would allow for safe passage as the northern corridor is used more and more for commercial and pleasure travel. The Canadian Coast Guard needs to be established as a Separate Statutory Agency. Airports should have access to more funding and not be privatized. The Canadian Transportation Agency does not require further powers and the Transportation Safety Board should be given enforcement powers. All of this would help to ensure the continuing safety and security of people and goods across Canada.