

Position Paper

Regional Airport for Southern Labrador



Background

On September 17, 2009 President Gary Bolger and Executive Director Roxanne Notley meet with Air Labrador manager, Phillip Earle to discuss the state of air service from Cartwright – Mary’s Harbour. We were presented with passenger reports for flights for the past year, and projections for the next months. It was very apparent that the business could no longer continue a three-day schedule passenger service.

With the announcement of the TransLabrador Highway construction in 1997, there was an understanding that there would be changes with both Marine and Air Service for the south coast. It has been fortunate for many communities that air service has remained in operation with only one airport decommission to date (Paradise River). In 2002, we learned of Government’s plan for Port Hope Simpson to become the regional site *“Once the changes are implemented, Port Hope Simpson will become the site of a regional airport. Government will monitor transportation patterns to and from the airport and after an appropriate period of time, assess the requirement for changes and/or upgrades to the airport to reflect traffic needs.”*

<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2002/wst/0321n64.htm>. The SADC have made inquiries on the progress of this activity, and to date a letter of request to the Federal Government was submitted.

<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2009/tw/0722n04.htm>

Restating the SADC Position

The SADC board recognizing the changes that has occurred with the Trans Labrador Highway strongly supports a Regional Airport in the Port Hope Simpson area. The board supports also a regular air service to the isolated communities of Black Tickle and Williams Harbour. The board also supports the recommendation in 2005 for the airport in Cartwright to remain open and maintained as planned.

Current Realities & Action Required

The infrequency and inconsistency of air service is having a negative impact on everyone in the zone (mail service, medical, or meeting schedules). This frustration does not require reiteration here. The fact remains that despite a road connection there continues to be a need for air service and to foster economic growth within the region air, marine and road are all necessary in rural regions. We cannot afford to allow air-service to disappear or to become even less reliable than it is today from our region. Together we must advocate:

- Regional Airport
- Schedule Air medical service

The SADC respectfully request your support in taking action to secure reliable air service for the region.

Other links of interest:

http://www.laa.gov.nl.ca/laa/northern_strategic_plan/status.pdf

<http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/corporate-services/des-reports-2007-labrador-313.htm>

<http://www.tw.gov.nl.ca/publications/southern-lab-airport.pdf>