



*Southern Interior Local  
Government Association*

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October 27, 2021

sent via individual emails

SILGA MPs and MLAs

**Re: Kelowna International Airport (YLW)**

The last international flight at the Kelowna International Airport (YLW) was on April 9, 2020. Since then, travellers in the BC Southern Interior have only been able to fly internationally through either Vancouver or Calgary. Recently Transport Canada opened an additional five airports for international travel; unfortunately YLW was not on their list.

The suspension of international flights at YLW is not only an impediment to citizens within the SILGA region to travel but is also a significant barrier to the economic recovery of BC's Southern Interior region. Transport Canada states "it's putting safety first when it comes to reopening international passenger air traffic at regional airports." Now that every traveller must be fully vaccinated, we do not understand the logic in continuing to keep YLW closed if the health and safety of travellers can be assured at this airport.

Airlines who have scheduled international flights through the Kelowna International Airport are cancelling routes and will continue to cancel routes if international status for regional airports is not reopened. We know that cancellations of flights currently scheduled for the winter season will mean international routes are unlikely to return until summer 2022.

We appreciate that Canada is relying on medical experts to provide reliable advice on when restrictions might be lifted. We also understand that COVID-19 continues to change the "goalposts" for full reopening of our economy as the country works through wave after wave.

However, if Transport Canada could provide the Kelowna International Airport with target timelines or criteria to open, they could start the necessary work to allow that to happen on an expedited schedule once it is safe to do so.

If you require any additional information to support our request, please reach out. We look forward to hearing back from you.

Sincerely,

*Karla Kozakevich*

Karla Kozakevich  
SILGA President

cc: Tracy Gray, MP [Tracy.Gray@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Tracy.Gray@parl.gc.ca)  
Richard Canning, MP [Richard.canning@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Richard.canning@parl.gc.ca)  
Dan Albas, MP [dan.albas@parl.gc.ca](mailto:dan.albas@parl.gc.ca)  
Frank Caputo, MP [frank.caputo@parl.gc.ca](mailto:frank.caputo@parl.gc.ca)  
Mel Arnold, MP [mel.arnold.c1a@parl.gc.ca](mailto:mel.arnold.c1a@parl.gc.ca)  
Rob Morrison, MP [rob.morrison@parl.gc.ca](mailto:rob.morrison@parl.gc.ca)  
Greg Kylo, MLA Shuswap [greg.kylo.mla@leg.bc.ca](mailto:greg.kylo.mla@leg.bc.ca)  
Dan Ashton, MLA Penticton [dan.ashton.mla@leg.bc.ca](mailto:dan.ashton.mla@leg.bc.ca)  
Harwinder Sandhu, MLA [harwinder.sandhu.mla@leg.bc.ca](mailto:harwinder.sandhu.mla@leg.bc.ca)  
Renee Merrifield, MLA [renee.merrifield.mla@leg.bc.ca](mailto:renee.merrifield.mla@leg.bc.ca)  
Norm Letnick, MLA [norm.letnick.mla@leg.bc.ca](mailto:norm.letnick.mla@leg.bc.ca)  
Todd Stone, MLA [todd.stone.mla@leg.bc.ca](mailto:todd.stone.mla@leg.bc.ca)  
Jackie Tegart, MLA [jackie.tegart.mla@leg.bc.ca](mailto:jackie.tegart.mla@leg.bc.ca)  
Peter Milobar, MLA [peter.milobar.mla@leg.bc.ca](mailto:peter.milobar.mla@leg.bc.ca)  
Roly Russell, MLA [roly.russell.mla@leg.bc.ca](mailto:roly.russell.mla@leg.bc.ca)  
Ben Stewart, MLA [ben.stewart.mla@leg.bc.ca](mailto:ben.stewart.mla@leg.bc.ca)  
Doug Clovechok, MLA [doug.clovechok.mla@leg.bc.ca](mailto:doug.clovechok.mla@leg.bc.ca)  
Sam Samaddar, YLW [ssamaddar@kelowna.ca](mailto:ssamaddar@kelowna.ca)  
Gary MacIsaac, UBCM [gmacisaac@ubcm.ca](mailto:gmacisaac@ubcm.ca)