

Chambers of Commerce in Ottawa and Gatineau Strongly Supports Continuation of Community Not-for-Profit Ownership Model for Ottawa International Airport Authority

Ottawa, May 24, 2017 - The Ottawa Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the Orléans Chamber of Commerce, the West Ottawa Board of Trade, and the Gatineau Chamber of Commerce announced today that it is standing with the Ottawa International Airport Authority and Canada's world-class airport governance model.

As the Government of Canada publicly contemplates a potential sale of major Canadian airports, organizations and individuals are voicing their concerns about the negative impact a sale of airports would have on travellers and local communities. Selling Canada's airports to private, for-profit investors would increase travel costs for passengers, remove local voices from airport boards and undermine Canada's economic competitiveness.

Canada's airports are a success story. In the 1990s, the country's major airports were privatized by the Government of Canada and transferred to local not-for-profit airport authorities with a mandate to advance economic growth and promote development in the communities in which they operate. Today, Canada's major airports do not receive any federal funding but together they pay over \$1 billion a year in rents and other fees to the Government of Canada.

"Canada's world-class airports are major economic generators in the communities they serve," said the heads of Chambers of Commerce in Ottawa. "In Ottawa's case, the airport contributes more than \$2.2 billion in economic activity each year, is the key gateway into Canada's Capital Region, and has its community's interest at the forefront of their activities and decisions. Our members need a more competitive air transportation sector that supports growth in the region, not a more expensive one that erodes growth."

"We are well aware that privatization could have as much of an effect on the economic impact to the Gatineau region as it could in Ottawa and elsewhere. Changing the current model that we value would create a negative financial impact resulting in increased prices for customers. The partners collectively demonstrate the importance of not implementing this approach," commented Jean-Claude Des Rosiers, President of the Gatineau Chamber of Commerce.

The Chambers of Commerce in Ottawa and the Gatineau Chamber of Commerce agree with its counterpart Chambers and Boards of Trade from across Canada, by recognizing that "Canada's airports are strategic and economic infrastructure assets that significantly contribute to Canada's employment and prosperity", as presented in the Canadian Global Cities Council report on increasing global connectivity and economic value, released in December 2016.

"I'm very pleased to have the support of the Chambers of Commerce in Ottawa and Gatineau and their membership," said Mark Laroche, President and CEO of the Ottawa International Airport Authority. "We feel very strongly that the community is best served by the current not-for-profit model that is focused on customer service, keeping fees low, and reinvesting all revenues in airport operations rather than paying shareholders. We appreciate the Chambers of Commerce in Ottawa and Gatineau adding their voice to ours."

About the Airport Coalition

In February, the Calgary, Ottawa and Vancouver airport authorities launched the website, www.noairportselloff.ca, to highlight the success of Canada's major airports, which are recognized as being among the most efficient in the world. The site cautions that a sell-off would likely increase costs for travellers, lead to a reduction in service levels, remove local voices from airport boards and undermine Canada's economic competitiveness. A new tool was introduced on the website in April, which allows Canadians to add their voices to the growing number of experts and organizations already raising concerns about the negative impact of selling off Canada's award-winning airports.

About the Ottawa International Airport Authority

OMCIIA manages, operates and develops airport facilities and lands in support of the economic growth of Canada's Capital Region, generating more than \$2.2 billion annually in total economic activity in Ottawa and Gatineau.

The Chambers of Commerce in Ottawa and Gatineau:

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