

December 3, 2020

The Honourable Marc Garneau
Minister of Transport
Transport Canada
330 Sparks Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N5

The Honourable Caroline Mulroney
Minister of Transportation
Ministry of Transportation
5th Floor, 777 Bay St.
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1Z8

Re: Investing in the development of a new US Customs and Border Protection Facility (USCBP) at Billy Bishop Airport

Dear Ministers Garneau and Mulroney,

As you know, COVID-19 coupled with the implementation of border restrictions and necessary public health measures have deeply impacted the tourism industry. Given the uncertainties around when a vaccine will be available and the length of time it will take to distribute it, tourism will remain local for the foreseeable future.

Recognizing this, the federal and provincial governments have announced various investments and initiatives to mitigate against the impact that COVID-19 has had on the domestic tourism industry and encourage Ontarians to travel local. As Canadians and Americans continue to prioritize local over international travel, building the requisite infrastructure to provide business and leisure travellers with an efficient and fast experience will be critical.

We are therefore writing to express our support for a new US Customs and Border Protection Facility (USCBP) at Billy Bishop Airport. In 2019, Billy Bishop Airport welcomed almost 3 million business and leisure passengers. The airport offers flights to over 20 destinations in Canada and the United States, as well as 80 locations around the world. This makes Billy Bishop Airport the ninth-busiest airport in Canada and the six-busiest Canadian airport serving the United States.

Once the border re-opens and travel volumes rise, the construction of a new USCBP facility at Billy Bishop Airport will have several benefits. To begin, it will provide Ontario businesses in all sectors and Ontarians across the province with easier connections to and from US destinations. By making travel more efficient, this could encourage more cross-border business travel and facilitate additional opportunities between businesses and entrepreneurs in Ontario and the United States. It could also encourage more visitors to travel within North America, further supporting our domestic tourism industry, tourism operators, local businesses and attractions, and adjacent industries.

Secondly, supporting and investing in this shovel-ready and shovel-worthy project could create an economic ripple effect in Ontario. As you know, Billy Bishop Airport is a key international gateway and economic driver in Toronto – contributing \$470 million to our GDP every year and supporting 4,740 direct and indirect jobs. Funding through the federal and provincial governments for a new USCBP facility at Billy Bishop Airport will generate a return on investment that includes the creation of new jobs for the airport and surrounding region.

Nieuport Aviation, the owner and operator of the terminal at Billy Bishop Airport, has also demonstrated its steadfast commitment to supporting Ontario's economy and growth. In 2015, Nieuport purchased the Terminal Building at Billy Bishop Airport and subsequently invested \$50 million to complete terminal upgrades. Nieuport is dedicated to supporting our economy and travelers and is keen to build the preclearance facility – even during these uncertain times.

In recent legislation and in the 2018 Budget, the federal government envisioned and supported the development of a preclearance facility at Billy Bishop Airport. We hope that the federal and provincial governments and PortsToronto will continue to support this worthy investment in Ontario's transportation infrastructure. The construction of a new USCBP facility would ensure that, once the pandemic is resolved, Billy Bishop Airport can provide cross-border travellers with an efficient preclearance experience and contribute to Ontario's economic recovery.

We appreciate your continued leadership during the pandemic and the support your governments have provided to employers, employees, and the tourism industry. We welcome the opportunity to discuss the construction of a USCBP facility further.

Sincerely,

Rocco Rossi
President and CEO
Ontario Chamber of Commerce

CC: The Honourable Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance
The Honourable Mélanie Joly, Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages
The Honourable Rod Phillips, Minister of Finance
The Honourable Vic Fedeli, Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade
Scott Brownrigg, Director, Public Affairs, Nieuport Aviation