March 18, 2020

The Honourable Bill Blair, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness
Via e-mail: bill.blair@parl.gc.ca
ps.ministerofpublicsafety-ministredelasecuritepublique.sp@canada.ca

Dear Minister:

On behalf of over 63,000 pilots at 35 U.S. and Canadian airlines at the Air Line Pilots Association, Int’l. (ALPA), I am writing you regarding a health and safety concern identified by ALPA pilots that requires your urgent attention.

With our country and the world on high alert due to the ongoing spread of COVID-19, I have heard from many of our members over the last number of days with concerns over possible exposure to the virus while they wait in long and congested lines with passengers (with unknown health status) to exit the customs area at several airports across the country.

The Prime Minister has designated flight crews (pilots and flight attendants) as exempt from many of the restrictions being placed on citizens because it is recognized that they have a vital role to play in keeping our nation connected and resupplied. They are stepping up to the challenge at personal risk, and in order for them to continue to step up and minimize their risk of infection, they must be separated from the general public to the maximum extent possible.

In addition to the urgent need to separate flight crews from passengers at Customs exit points, this should also occur at all points of access to and from restricted areas of airports. Separate lines already exist at some airports for security screening and preclearance for U.S. Customs, but at others they do not exist. As a minimum, there should be separate lanes to services such as security screening and Customs preclearance and clearance at all airports.

As this issue crosses several ministries and agencies, we request that the relevant minister take immediate action to reduce the potential of flight crew exposure to
COVID-19 at airports by issuing a temporary directive that will separate flight crews from passenger lines.

During these difficult times, our priority continues to be the safety and security of the flying public and flight crews. Dedicated lanes to separate flight crews from passengers are urgently required to help minimize the exposure of those who continue to work on the front lines of this pandemic.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Captain Tim Perry
ALPA Canada President
Air Line Pilots Association, International

cc: The Honourable Marc Garneau, P.C., M.P. mintc@tc.gc.ca
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    The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P. pm@pm.gc.ca