

## Airport Presentation – Regional Council March 28 2007

Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

I'm speaking on behalf of the Green Door Alliance and the Durham Conservation Association. Many of us are old People or Planes members. My home was expropriated. And 32 years ago next week I made a presentation for People or Planes to a Provincial Cabinet Committee, and a few days later to then Premier Davis on the same issue as the proposed motion before you today – the need for the Pickering Airport.

I think most everyone would agree Mirabel was a disastrous decision. And if the federal government had their way decades ago Pickering would have been built rather than expanding Pearson, a course of action most everyone would now agree would also have been another expensive disaster.

The Region has been a long supporter of the airport. Viewed from the Regional perspective even if it couldn't be justified from a broader Canadian public interest point of view, as long as the Region wasn't stuck with the bill and stood to get some positive economic spin off, the Region has considered the airport 'needed'.

Some may now feel that even if it couldn't be justified decades ago, a smaller Regional Facility at Pickering will now benefit both the broader public and the Region.

However even if one buys into GTAA passenger forecasts, given the massive expansion at Pearson with further expansion possible, along with the ability of Hamilton to handle very significant passenger volumes, not to mention likely additional capacity increases, any need for Pickering is still a long way off.

Talking about forecasts, in 1972 Transport Canada forecast 62 million passengers for Pearson by the year 2,000. Pearson actually handled under 31 million passengers in 2006 just under half Transport Canada's 1972 projection for the year 2,000 six years earlier. No wonder they call economic forecasting a 'dismal science'.

In 2002 the GTAA commissioned a financial assessment to analyze whether a business case for Pickering using revenue from Pearson to fund development could be made. This analysis assumed Pearson would handle 35.4 million passengers in 2006 a number that turned out to be 14% higher than the already noted 2006 actual of 31 million. This analysis contained three forecasts for Pickering in 2032 ranging from a low of 3.9 million to a high of 9.7 million.

However the 2007 GTAA estimate for 2032 just given to Planning Committee now appears to call for Pickering to handle 11.9 million passengers out of a total GTA regional passenger demand in 2032 of 70 million. So in 2007 starting from a 2006 actual 13% **lower** than their 2002 forecast, they now feel the demand at Pickering in 2032 will be **23% higher** than their 2002 high end scenario forecast for Pickering; and **200% higher** than their low forecast.

One should look very cynically at projections 25-30 years into the future as justification for spending a billion or more to open Pickering over the next decade or so.

As one looks forward 25 – 30 years there is also an absolutely critical unconsidered new element. World wide, carbon dioxide emissions from aircraft are growing faster than any other form of green house emissions. George Montbiot in his recent book 'Heat' makes the case that particularly since unlike other areas of energy consumption, there are no substantial fixes to existing aircraft technology that will significantly reduce carbon emissions, "unless something is done to stop this growth, aviation will overwhelm all the cuts we manage to make elsewhere." Flying he states "dwarfs any other impact a single person can exert". According to the U.K. Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution, the carbon emissions per air passenger mile while half the average carbon emission per auto traveler mile, have to be multiplied by the huge distances traveled by air. Not only that, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate change estimates that when one considers all the gas and particle emissions in the upper atmosphere, the warming effect of air travel could be 2.7 times that of the carbon dioxide alone!

Lest you feel that I am reading too many alarmist left wing tree hugger rants, I refer you to a June 2006 article in the Economist which points to a European Commission study that states long haul flights are 50% worse than cars per passenger km traveled, and short hall flights where a smaller proportion of time is spent on cruising, are fully three times worse than cars per passenger km. – much worse than the numbers I reference above.

To quote the Economist article, "This week IATA said the net loss to the world's airlines in the past six years would amount to almost \$44 billion. Carriers have been hit by terrorism, war, recession, the respiratory disease SARS and soaring oil prices. There were hopes the industry could make a small profit in 2007. but having to pay for environmental costs would change that. **Yet global warming is not something that airlines or any other industry can shake off for ever. Sooner or later, aviation will have to shoulder the burden it imposes on the planet**"

And the March 17-23<sup>rd</sup> 2007 Economist reports that David Cameron the British Conservative leader who is presently leading his Labor challenger Gordon Brown in the polls has identified climate change as the issue that will most change people's perceptions of his party. He is proposing progressively higher taxes for those who fly above a certain amount.

Presently there is no international agreement on allocating carbon emissions from international flights. IATA is a very powerful lobby and taxing air travel while the right thing to do is going to be very difficult to sell politically and reach international agreements on. However there seems absolutely no doubt that as climate concerns intensify and public concerns mount, air passenger and cargo travel won't be given the same free ride. If the true costs of air travel including carbon emissions were passed on to users, current demand forecasts 25-30 years out on which the feasibility of Pickering is based, would be significantly reduced And as I've pointed out they are very shaky to begin with. Also a number of approaches to decreasing emissions such as increasing

aircraft load factors and plane sizes would further increase runway capacity at Pearson further harming the business case for Pickering.

And as climate concerns increase, additional action to cap air travel emissions may also be required. The next few decades are not the time when Canada should be contemplating further capacity increases at Pickering – increases which inevitably go beyond meeting demand to also stimulate new demand, significantly further impairing Canada's ability to be a good global steward.

Global warming concerns will greatly weaken the GTAA plan before any Environmental Assessment Panel; ensure far more passionate public opposition; and make it much more difficult for the Province to go along with, and the Federal Government to approve.

To conclude please:

- Don't pass a motion whose wording implies the need for Pickering has been demonstrated and that the current Transport Canada Review is unnecessary and should be expedited.
- Don't prejudge the result and ask for an EA even before seeing and having the opportunity to assess the Transport Canada review.
- Push Transport Canada to do a thorough and open review not a rubber stamp. The current secretive Transport Canada approach where Durham citizens are kept totally in the dark regarding the nature of the review is very disturbing and completely inappropriate.
- Factor climate change and other environmental impacts into your deliberations on whether or not an airport should be placed on this class 1 foodland.
- Push Transport Canada for action on the Federal Green Space lands and push them to expand them. It's been more than six years ago now since Transport Canada's commitment to preserve 7200 acre of the 18,000 acre site as permanent green space. It's been almost three and a half years since an advisory group of stakeholders appointed by the Government, including representatives from Durham and York Regions, Pickering, Uxbridge and Markham, assisted in the development of a Draft Green Space Master Plan. Yet Transport Canada has done nothing to implement any of its major recommendations – recommendations that would at least have begun to address environmental and tenant concerns on the green space portion - a portion that even when substantially expanded would not preclude a future possible airport.
- General Aviation alone provides no justification for opening Pickering. Consult General Aviation owners and pilots who are concerned the GTAA fails to recognize the value and positive economic impact of smaller airports – airports that can serve much of this market segment better than a larger much more expensive facility at Pickering where heavy jet traffic would be mixed with smaller aircraft.

Thank you for your consideration,

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