

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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NEW DEMOCRAT TRANSPORT CRITIC DEMANDS FEDERAL AVIATION SAFETY PRACTICES MUST BE INVESTIGATED

OTTAWA: Transport Canada and the Transportation Safety Board (TSB) are failing in their duty to protect the safety of Canadians who travel by air and those who work in the industry. There must be a public investigation into how these agencies operate, said the New Democrats' Transport Critic.

Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic) made the call following a three hour round table discussion by aviation experts which he hosted.

"From what I heard this is a disaster waiting to happen," said Bevington. "Transport Canada and the TSB have developed a culture of secrecy where whistleblowers are persecuted and fatal accidents are seen as just a cost of doing business."

Participants at the round table explained how they have been stonewalled by both agencies when trying to get answers about aviation accidents, how those who point out safety issues are persecuted and how in order to save money and reduce crown liability the federal government is planning to remove itself from its duty to make inspections and enforce safety regulations.

"I am particularly concerned about the plans to bring in Safety Management Systems (SMS) without the necessary public oversight in their operations," said Bevington. "What I heard was that there is a management culture at Transport Canada and the TSB which places dollars and cents above human lives, because of this we need a public inquiry into how these agencies have walked away from their duties."

New Democrat International Commerce Critic Peter Julian (Burnaby-New Westminster) expressed grave concern that Transport Canada has begun implementing SMS without any legislative authority. "This is just contrary to democracy. One of the oldest rules of Parliament is that the government may not act without the legislative authority granted by the House of Commons and the Senate."

Joining Mr. Bevington in making this announcement were Mr. Greg Holbrooke, Chair of the Federal Pilots Association; Mr. Ian Bron, Secretary for Canadians for Accountability; and Ms. Kirsten Stevens an Advocate for the Safety of Workers Transported by Air.

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