Union of Canadian Transportation Employees
Public Service Alliance of Canada
233 Gilmour Street Suite 702 Ottawa ON K2P 0P2

Union canadienne des employés des transports
Alliance de la fonction publique du Canada
233 rue Gilmour bureau 702 Ottawa (ON) K2P 0P2

UCTE Raises Alarm Over Federal Airport Privatization Plans

Union questions who benefits, who bears the costs and what protections exist for travellers, workers and communities

OTTAWA — November 5, 2026 — The Union of Canadian Transportation Employees (UCTE) is raising serious concerns following the federal government's announcement in Budget 2026 of plans to introduce long-term private operating concessions for Canada's four largest airports.

UCTE, which represents airport workers across Canada, recognizes the importance of investing in modern, reliable airport infrastructure. However, the union is calling for full transparency about the government's intentions, the role of private investors and the potential consequences for workers, travellers and communities.

"Our airports are essential public infrastructure," said Barry Tchir, UCTE National President. "The current reinvestment model serves Canadians. Before changing it, the government needs to explain what problem it is trying to solve, why privatization is the answer and what guarantees will protect the public interest."

UCTE is particularly concerned about the potential for increased airport fees, higher costs for travellers and reduced public accountability. While the budget promises measures to protect travellers from unreasonable fee increases, questions remain about how these protections would be implemented and enforced. The union is also concerned that private investors could benefit financially while workers, travellers and communities bear the risks.

"Canadians deserve to know who stands to benefit from these plans, who will be accountable and who will ultimately bear the costs," added Tchir. "Workers and communities should not be left in the dark while decisions about critical public infrastructure are being made."

Canada's existing not-for-profit airport authority model is built around reinvestment. Airport revenues support communities, airport operations and infrastructure rather than being distributed as profits to private shareholders.

UCTE is calling on the federal government to disclose the full scope of its plans, including which airports will be affected, what operational control and decision-making authority would be transferred, and what safeguards will protect employment, airport safety, affordability and public accountability.

The union is also demanding meaningful consultation with airport workers and their bargaining agents before any changes are implemented.

Media Contact:
Kevin Matthews
Communications Officer, UCTE
matthek@psac-afpc.com | 613-850-8764