

Minister  
Transport Canada

Dear sir;

Are you aware that effective this spring, should an aircraft desire to fly from here in Whitehorse to Dawson City (200 miles North), we need to contact someone in Kamloops British Columbia (1200 miles South) to find out if the runway in Dawson is dry, if the Minto Mine is blasting today, if the smoke on the Indian River is drifting west, if the weather en route is suitable, etc etc.?

Of course the guy in the Southern Okanagan is getting his information from another guy in Montreal (3000 miles, 2 mountain ranges, and 5 more provinces away). But to compensate he was flown up here to Yukon once, at Government expense. What could possibly go wrong here?

Yeah.....we can't really do anything about it! Cost savings? Each Government or Department or Agency cutting without regard to coordination. Each using it's own justification system with a code of acronyms (HIRA, MLAT, ADSB?) Each playing a game of cutting where it draws most public attention in order to make it difficult for their politician masters, or cutting difficult to deliver public services to fund better internal administration. Service cuts follow service cuts, but costs still go up?

But as quickly as the safety support to Northern Aviation disappears, the vacuum is filled with more rules; (IE; We can't use 126.7 to get flight information ( "...because the frequency is too crowded in Southern Canada" they argue!), or You can't land on the grass beside the runway in Mayo unless you get a SPECIAL LICENSE ahead of time that makes you safer. It's a safety issue they say? If flying South you are not allowed to land in Prince George for fuel any more, not unless you are "Transponder" equipped. So remember to load jerry-cans and land on the highway 10 miles South of Prince George and refuel yourself, that is apparently safer.

And now, pilots can only get advice from a guy wearing sandals, shorts and a Hawaiian shirt who sits in an air-conditioned office beside Okanagan Lake?

My favorite saying is "Lex Malla, Lex Nulla" (Bad Law is No Law). It certainly applies in aviation where we continue to solve problems we didn't really have by adding new restrictions and more administration.

But these recent cuts have me thinking the Government is spawning a new favorite; "Safety Malla non Safety Nulla". Or is it the other way around? It doesn't really matter because it never really was about safety anyway.

I recall the investigation into the Exxon Valdez....most of us recall that event. In review they found that for years cost savings justified removal of system after system and service after service. It was stated in judicial review afterwards that "...in light of (all these reductions) this event was inevitable...".

Of course my airplane won't kill that many birds, so maybe that is also figured in?

Is it possible to bring reality back into the world of aviation. How outrageous would it be to stop cutting services that might be used, and instead stop funding the creation of more rules ?

Just make the existing rules available by re-writing the Aeronautics Act and Air Regulations so we can understand them and comply. I bet problems will disappear all through the system. You'll save a bundle of tax dollars.

Safety doesn't depend on more rules we can't justify or understand, nor does it require more bureaucrats to help us read them. Especially when the cost is fewer knowledgeable people we can talk to before flying to Dawson.

J George Balmer  
The last Flying Taxpayer