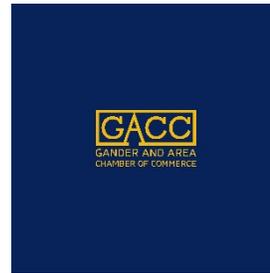




**Gander  
Int'l**



## **COVID CLAIMS NEARLY 300 AVIATION JOBS IN AIRPORT TOWN Industry needs a policy push to get Gander ungrounded**

**Jan. 28, 2021** – Since the beginning of the COVID-19 Pandemic, there have been 290 job losses in Gander's once robust aviation sector, representing the loss of \$25 Million in wages in the Town of Gander and surrounding communities.

Aviation and aerospace employ one in five workers in the Town of Gander, commanding salaries 20% above the mean earnings average for the community. Gander's aviation and aerospace sector produces \$400 Million in total direct and indirect economic output annually.

The job losses span across the aviation section, with 60% being airline employees. The remainder is from companies that provide direct airline support services, such as ground handlers, aircraft refuelers, and air navigation service providers. These 290 job losses do not account for downstream or spin-off impacts, such as reduced demand for taxis, hotel rooms or spending in the community.

At peak, the airport hosted upward of a dozen daily flights to six destinations – St. John's, Halifax, Goose Bay, Toronto, Varadero, Cuba and Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, served by Air Canada, Sunwing Airlines, WestJet Encore and PAL Airlines. On January 23, Air Canada suspended all passenger operations at Gander International Airport. PAL Airlines has maintained a daily intra-provincial service.

Gander International Airport Authority (GIAA) President and CEO Reg Wright explained that other job impacts are volumetric and related to a significant drop in passengers.

"With fewer passengers, you sell less coffees, you rent fewer cars, you handle less luggage, and so on. COVID-19 and the accompanying travel restrictions have killed demand. When bookings die, you can expect routes, jobs, airlines and airports to die with it. Our town is generally economically resilient, but these things become a mortal threat when your community depends on a dynamic aviation ecosystem."

Gander Mayor Percy Farwell expressed his deep concern “about the impact of these layoffs on workers, their families, our industry and community.

“It’s been 320 days since this all began, and there is still no tailored sector support from the Federal or Provincial government for this hardest hit of industries,” he said. “Aviation needs meaningful help to bridge this crisis. We need to work together to get this industry ungrounded and safely flying again.”

Gander and Area Chamber of Commerce 1st Vice-Chair Hannah de Young called on the Prime Minister to provide aid to Canada’s beleaguered airlines, contingent on re-establishing national air service to airports abandoned during the Pandemic, including Gander International Airport.

“Aviation is Gander, and Gander is aviation. If we are going to push through these headwinds, we need to balance health and economic recovery. If anything, the situation is direr now than it was eleven months ago. Support for the aviation industry is central to economic recovery and regional growth for all business sectors,” Ms. de Young said.

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