



**ST. JOHN'S**  
*International Airport Authority*

**For Immediate Release**

## **News Release**

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### **PSAC Fails to Meet its Obligations Under Essential Services Agreement**

*PSAC's continual refusal to abide by the Essential Services Agreement resulted to flight disruptions over the weekend*

ST. JOHN'S, NL – Monday, December 17, 2012 – PSAC has once again failed to meet its obligations under the Essential Services Agreement during the most recent snow event and contributed to a number of flight delays and cancellations over this past weekend.

Under the Essential Services Agreement, signed by both PSAC and the Authority and issued as an order of the Canada Industrial Relations Board (CIRB), the union is required to cooperate with the Authority to ensure there are a sufficient number of essential employees available to maintain safe Airport operations. Over this past weekend's snow event, the union failed to cooperate, resulting in fewer resources available than the weather conditions warranted. The Authority exercised its rights under the Essential Services Agreement to request additional operators from the union in order to maintain priority one areas of the airfield and to maintain safe airport operations. However, the union refused to cooperate with the Authority to ensure there were six additional operators available to maintain safe Airport operations. As a result, the single crew of operators was unable to maintain the airfield to a level required for safe airline operations and the flight schedule was impacted. Had the additional resources been made available, impacts to the flight schedule would have been minimal.

“The union's refusal to cooperate under the Essential Services Agreement is reckless, irresponsible and is a callous disregard for public safety. Not only did this inconvenience many

travellers, the closure of the airfield meant the airport was unavailable for medical flights and emergency landings. We view this as a serious breach of PSAC's duty to cooperate and we are requesting an immediate CIRB hearing to deal with this latest failure," said Keith Collins, President and CEO of the St. John's International Airport Authority.

This is the second time in three weeks that the Authority has had to go to the CIRB related to the union's violation of the Essential Services Agreement during a snow event. Following the last incident on November 28, 2012, the CIRB ruled that the union should have provided the additional resources that were requested. As late as last week (December 10, 2012) the union and the Authority submitted a signed amendment to the Essential Services Agreement to the CIRB that clarified any misunderstandings associated with the requirement to provide additional resources to maintain flight operations. PSAC, however, did not honour the intention of this amended agreement this past weekend.

"It appears that PSAC's misuse of the Essential Services Agreement is a bargaining strategy. This strategy will not work. The Essential Services Agreement is too important to be used as a ploy for bargaining and we are calling on the CIRB to ensure that PSAC will comply with its obligations under the Essential Services Agreement," added Collins.

*St. John's International Airport Authority is a private, not-for-profit organization with the mandate to provide the region with a safe, cost-efficient transportation facility that is a catalyst for economic growth. Under the provisions of a long-term Ground Lease with the Federal Government of Canada, the Airport Authority is responsible for the airport's operations on behalf of the community it serves.*