

July 6, 2005

Hon. Jean Lapierre,
Minister
Transport Canada
Place de Ville, 330 Sparks Street,
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N5

Dear Mr. Minister:

In response to your letter dated June 21, 2005 concerning the modernization of ACAT, I am deeply troubled by your decision of the proposed make-up of the new ACAT. In my opinion, you are stepping backwards instead of using the talent and resources that organizations provide through their networking and membership. Of course, I refer to the decision of applying ACAT membership to only individuals of the consumer sector of the committee rather than through the various organizations supporting people with disabilities and seniors. At the same time, you recognize the importance of industry not individuals by their presence through their respective organizations. This seems to be inconsistency on the general mandate of the committee when representing Canadian travelers with disabilities and seniors. How can industry be expected to regulate themselves?

Over the years the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association and the other non-profit association/organizations have given openly and freely of their time and opinions in the name of ACAT's mandate on behalf of the community they serve. Only recently, has the name of ACAT been altered possibly due to differing opinions between your office and members of your advisory committee. I refer you to the Via Rail fiasco, the attendant Air Fare on-going discussions that still awaits a decision from your office and; of course, the most recent situation where CCD provided you with ample opportunity to satisfactorily address their concerns. You apparently elected to do nothing only to hear at your last ACAT meeting (November 2004) of their intention to withdraw their services as advisor

until such time as you were prepared to make decisions and serve the people of Canada, all Canadians.

Your letter to all consumer groups of the ACAT community clearly demonstrated your willingness to face the groups to outline your vision of the modernized ACAT. The placing of individuals rather than organizations at the table is a regressive step in process of the advisory role.

Our association is asking that you reconsider the decision of the process of applying for membership on the committee and to accept organizations that are in touch with the people of Canada. Reconsider the overall decision to make your committee an advisory committee and assist you in your decision to make where All Canadians see Access for All. The Canadian Hard of Hearing Association is fully prepared to work with you and others in Canada to ensure the success of the committee's work. The original vision of ACAT is still achievable but only if you have a willingness to work together directly with your committee.

Yours truly,



Carole Willans-Théberge
National President
Canadian Hard of Hearing Association

Cc: Ms. Janice McNamara, Executive Director CHHA
Mr. Colin Cantlie, Chair CHHA Transportation Committee