



---

## NEWS RELEASE

### BACKGROUND

#### **WESTERN PREMIERS' CONFERENCE 2010:**

#### **OPEN SKIES DECLARATION**

The following is the "Declaration on Open Skies" agreed to by the Western Premiers' Conference on June 16, 2010 in Vancouver.

"We, the undersigned, share the view of Canada's federal government that Open Skies agreements provide opportunities for better air services, increased flight options, greater efficiencies for airlines, increased competition and reduced prices for consumers.

We are encouraged by the agreement reached last year between Canada's federal government and South Korea, and by the ongoing benefits to Canadians from our other Open Skies treaties, such as those with the UK and the US. However, we are concerned that progress in removing restrictions on air access between Canada and key nations, notably in the Asia Pacific region, has been too slow. Now is the time to make Open Skies a top priority.

Canada is a nation where one in five jobs is tied to international trade. Canada depends for its prosperity on its ability to reach out to world markets, and seize new opportunities wherever they may exist. Open transportation links are therefore essential to Canadians' prosperity and quality of life. As a trading nation, built on immigration and reliant on active engagement with the world, Canada has every reason to seek an air access regime in which the widest possible range of carriers can openly and efficiently transport international passengers and cargo to and from the Canadian airports of their choice.

As it stands, too many of Canada's existing international air service agreements restrict Canadians' access to the world, and the world's access to us, by imposing artificial limits on international routes, flight frequencies, seat capacities, and a host of other factors. These reduce consumer choice and prevent Canadian airports and carriers from effectively competing for international air travel and commerce.

This issue goes beyond transportation. It is about Canada's ability to attract investors, trade, international students and tourists; Canadians' ease of access to international academic, business and family connections; and Canada's reputation as a trading nation. There are great opportunities ahead for Canadians, in the Asia Pacific and other important regions of the world, but they need Open Skies to seize these opportunities.

We urge the federal government to adopt an Open Skies policy, to aggressively pursue such a negotiating position during future international air service negotiations, and to seek to reopen and liberalize existing restrictive agreements.

We believe that a true Open Skies policy will create broad economic benefits that will be felt across the country. We offer our support to the federal government to achieve this urgently needed objective.”

-30-

**Contact:** Bridgitte Anderson  
Press Secretary  
Office of Premier Gordon Campbell  
Province of British Columbia  
604 307-7177 (mobile)