

Urgent Action Needed to Save Canadian Aviation Maintenance Industry!

For Immediate Release

Toronto, ON – The recent announcement by Air Canada/AVEOS of the layoff of more than one thousand aircraft maintenance mechanics is the latest indication that Canada is in danger of losing its place in this growing global industry.

“If we don’t do something right now, these jobs and this industry aren’t coming back,” declared IAMAW Canadian General Vice-President Dave Ritchie. The IAMAW is calling for an immediate response to this crisis.

“Air Canada has not accepted the responsibility for administering measures like an EI Worksharing program, to mitigate the damage, in this time of high unemployment,” said IAMAW District 140 President and General Chairperson Chuck Atkinson. “There also needs to be greater support for training and re-training programs to assist impacted workers and communities.”

“While the Mulroney government’s Air Canada privatization legislation contained a requirement for Air Canada to continue to have maintenance bases in Mississauga, Winnipeg and Montréal, this seems to have no appreciable effect on the company’s plans to phase out a large part of heavy maintenance work and ship it abroad, with the inherent risks of weaker regulation and lower standards,” explained Atkinson.

“Canada is losing an industry which has considerable growth potential as a globally competitive industry – an industry that could provide a growing number of highly-skilled high-technology jobs for young Canadians,” said Ritchie. “Canada needs an industrial strategy to maintain and build the capacity of this sector – starting with domestic procurement requirements for maintenance on Canadian-registered commercial aircraft being done in Canada where possible and including support for investment to modernize equipment.”

The IAMAW calls on our governments to step up to this challenge.

The International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers is the largest union at Air Canada, representing over 11,000 workers.