

Work with Us on Air Canada Maintenance Jobs Machinists Ask Federal Government!

Toronto, On – Canada’s largest air transport sector union – The International Association of Machinists (IAM) – is asking the federal government to work with it to ensure the Air Canada Public Participation Act (ACPPA) is upheld.

Recently, the Quebec Court of Appeal ruled that Air Canada had contravened the ACPPA by moving its heavy maintenance work out of Montreal, Winnipeg and Mississauga. In fact, the airline sent most of that work out of Canada after AVEOS, the former Air Canada heavy maintenance division, went bankrupt in 2012.

The IAM is the certified bargaining agent for Air Canada maintenance workers and continued to represent them when Air Canada spun off its heavy maintenance division to AVEOS. When AVEOS declared bankruptcy and closed operations in 2012, the IAM made every effort possible to hold Air Canada to its legal and moral obligations.

Unfortunately, the Harper Conservative government was unwilling to enforce the provisions of its own legislation to ensure that Air Canada heavy maintenance work stayed in Montreal, Winnipeg and Mississauga, and it fell to the Quebec and Manitoba Governments to undertake the legal challenge.

The IAM was able protect its 2,700 AVEOS members’ pensions and benefits, negotiating severance packages and finding job opportunities for many of the affected members – particularly at AJ Walters and Lockheed Martin, which took over a small portion of the AVEOS work in the Montreal area.

In a letter to the Federal Government and other MPs, the IAM is asking the government to commit to work with the IAM to ensure that the recent court decision leads to good Canadian jobs and fairness for workers, their families and the affected communities.

“Regardless of whether Air Canada decides to appeal the decision we’re specifically asking this new government to work with us in three key areas,” said IAM Canadian General Vice President Dave Ritchie.

- Commit to ensure that the Federal Government does not amend the ACPPA to remove Air Canada’s obligation to sustain heavy maintenance operations in Montreal, Winnipeg and Mississauga.
- Commit to ensure that the IAM, as the representative of the ex-employees of AVEOS, and the current employees of Air Canada, AJ Walters, and Lockheed Martin, will be actively involved in the planning for the return of Air Canada heavy maintenance work to Montreal, Winnipeg and Mississauga.
- Commit to ensure that Air Canada is not allowed to evade the provisions of the ACPPA by entering into long-term contracts or contract extensions for heavy maintenance in other places.