

July 16, 2025



To Our Local Elected Representatives,

I write today to ask for your support on behalf of your represented community for an important service enhancement at the Comox Valley Airport (YQQ). We have submitted a formal request to the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) seeking a change in our Airport of Entry (AOE) designation from AOE 160 to AOE 220 for Winter charter operations. This change would allow us to increase our very popular seasonal international flights, particularly to Mexico, in response to strong and growing regional demand.

The Comox Valley Airport has offered direct flights to Mexico since 2004, and the last two winter charter seasons have each seen over 10,000 passengers enjoy direct WestJet service to and from Puerto Vallarta. With demand continuing to grow, WestJet has expressed interest in expanding this service further. However, the viability of such growth is at risk under the newly implemented CBSA cost-recovery model and strict adherence to AOE limitations. For the first time in recent memory, CBSA instituted cost-recovery for this past charter season, specifically for the Sunday evening flight and invoiced \$84,000 for the 20 flights. Saturday evening flights were limited to the smaller, less efficient Boeing 737-700 due to the requirement to keep the passenger load below 160 AOE limitations.

This proposed change would provide CBSA service on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays from 16:00 to 24:00, during the peak season from October 15 to May 15. It represents a strategic opportunity to improve travel options for Island and Powell River residents while supporting economic resilience and sustainability through more efficient aircraft and reduced environmental impact. It meets the needs of our travellers by providing direct service to Mexico without the need for a stop in Vancouver or Calgary.

As part of our submission to CBSA, we are collecting letters of support from across our region. Your voice would significantly strengthen our request. If you are willing, we would greatly appreciate receiving a letter of support at your earliest convenience. Letters can be addressed to:

Kevin Charlton
Director West Coast & Yukon Division
Canada Border Services Agency
400-1321 Blanshard Street
Victoria, BC V8W 0B6

Letters can be submitted via email to us directly at YQQAdmin@comoxairport.com and we will include them in our formal package.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and continued support of YQQ. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or require assistance with preparing a letter.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M. Atkins".

Mike Atkins
CEO
Comox Valley Airport Commission