

An Open Letter to Howard Eng,
President and CEO of the
Greater Toronto Airport Authority,
Lester B Pearson International Airport.

June 24/15

Dear Howard,

In early March of this year I found myself sitting in a large ballroom at the Mississauga Convention Center with about 200 co-workers from our airport community. Most were there as management representatives of their companies, others were like me, frontline employees involved in the day to day operations within our working environment.

You gave a moving and powerful speech, I could feel your passion and see that you cared deeply about the safety and well-being of our workforce at YYZ. You spoke about the 40,000 workers that play a role in making this airport a global hub for Canada, and the importance of keeping safety our top priority. You set goals, so that we can work towards becoming the safest airport in the world.

What you were speaking of resonated with me, I also have a strong desire to have a safe workplace. That day I received an "Eye on Safety" award from the GTAA for my contribution to a positive safety culture at YYZ.

Unfortunately, there has been a disturbing trend that I believe has had a negative effect on the safety and culture of our working environment. That trend is contract flipping through the RFP process. I feel that we are taking a step backwards from the goals we set for our airport family. With our fuelling operations to be handed over to a new company in the fall, I have to ask what impact it will have on the safety of our overall workforce and our workplace. With more than 60 years of service from Consolidated Aviation at YYZ being thrown away, and with it the experience and best practices from that group of workers. Workers who currently make a fair and reasonable living, are able to pay their mortgages, feed their families, while systematically carrying out the requirements of their job. Are the new group of freshly trained employees who are making just over minimum wage going to care enough to do the same as the current fuelers?

I spoke with an airport fuelling worker at a rally in front of your administration building on Friday, June 12th. He said that he wasn't going to pursue a job with the new company. Not because of the lack of benefits or the 6-7 dollar an hour pay cut, he said it was because he didn't see a future anymore for workers at our airport. He is not the only worker at our airport with this opinion. I find this very unfortunate and believe it has become reality in what is essentially a race to the bottom.

I am writing to you because you have the power to keep this airport on the right path, the pathway to becoming the safest airport in the world. I worry that if we continue down the path we're on we will drift further away from achieving our goals. Please consider this when making your decision for the approval of an operating licence to the new fuelling company ASIG.

We have an opportunity to set an example to the rest of the airports in Canada, North America and the World. Lester B. Pearson International Airport could be a leader, by setting a minimum living wage and an economic wage zone. Showing the World that we care about our workers well-being, their quality of life and the value they bring from experience, similar to what other airports in the US have discovered. I believe the right decision here would not only bring about a positive impact to our overall safety culture, but would boost moral among co-workers and make them proud to belong to this airport community.

Could you please let me know when the decision to allow for the approval for the operating license will be made? I believe there have been informal discussions about the minimum living wage within the GTAA, I am wondering if you would be interested in formalizing a process so that we can set the idea into motion?

Congratulations on the extension of your contract to stay on as CEO and President of the Greater Toronto Airport Authority. I look forward to working with you on these issues and please feel free to reach out to me if I can help in anyway. I hope to look back at this time in my life and say that I played a significant role in the safety of my airport family and the passengers that travel through this great airport.

Respectfully submitted,

Dan Janssen.

Vice President of IAMAW LL2323
Toronto Airport Workers' Council