

Emerson Report FAQ

Q: What is the Emerson Report?

A: The Emerson Report is a sweeping review of the Canada Transportation Act which governs Canada's transportation system. The review was ordered in 2014 by then Minister of Transport, Lisa Raitt. The report and its appendix cover 500 pages of discussion, analysis and recommendations on all modes of transportation in Canada including air, rail, road and marine.

One of the many chapters in the report covers Canada's airports and air transportation. That chapter makes 10 recommendations, one of which concerns the ownership model of Canada's large airports. The current government may have tabled the report but they have not yet commented on its contents and instead have launched an additional review that is ongoing.

Q. When did this discussion start?

A. The reality is Canadians have been having conversations about the merits and perils of privatization for decades. Some recent examples of privatization in Ontario include Highway 407, Ornge and Hydro One. The first two are case studies in what can go wrong, and the third provides an excellent example of the public fighting back against privatization. Unifor has been a leader in the pushback across Ontario to oppose the continued move towards private ownership of our public infrastructure.

Q. What's going on now?

A. Instead of accepting the Emerson report and implementing its recommendations as is, Canada's current Minister of Transport, Hon. Marc Garneau, announced an additional round of consultations surrounding the Canada Transportation Act. Those conversations are ongoing and Unifor will be involved every step of the way in one-on-one meetings, larger round table discussions and in collaboration with the Canadian Labour Congress and other allies to ensure our message is heard: The private ownership of Canadian airports would not lead an improved system. Canada needs a made-in-Canada transportation system that meets the needs of all stakeholders, including airport workers across the country.

Q. What can we do to stop further privatization?

A. Airport privatization is a public policy issue. While Unifor, the GTAA, concerned citizens and multiple additional stakeholders all have influence over public policy matters, the ultimate decision is made by the Federal government. In this arena, Unifor has played and will continue to play a prominent role in advocating the current model of ownership be maintained. This will include submissions to the review, participation in high level meetings and collaboration with the Canadian Labour Congress on further input to the review.

Q. What steps has Unifor taken so far?

A. Unifor has been and will continue to monitor this file as the conversations continue. Monitoring will include public statements by stakeholders, including government, consultation with allies, decisions and changes.

Unifor will participate in the consultation process through one-on-one meetings, round-table discussions, submissions to the process and in collaboration with other stakeholders and allies.

While this decision will ultimately be made by the Federal government, the issue has been raised at the bargaining table and has been a subject of discussion with the GTAA bargaining team and through them the GTAA's leadership.

Timeline of events:

Summer 2014 – Canada Transportation Act Review was announced by Lisa Raitt, Minister of Transport. The review collected input from a wide cross section of stakeholders.

Fall 2015 – Unifor provided a submission to the Canada Transportation Act Review

Winter 2016 – the Emerson Report was tabled in the House of Commons. The Federal Government declined to provide comment on the review stating it needed time to go over the report before responding.

Spring 2016 – Transport Minister Marc Garneau announced further consultation on Canada's Transportation System including engagement with the public and high-level round table, topic specific meetings. Unifor has already participated in at least one of these and been in conversation with the Ministry.

Summer 2016 – Unifor will provide input into the on-going consultation through smaller meetings, round-table discussions and in cooperation with the CLC and other allies and stakeholders.