

Mark Holland, M.P., Ajax-Pickering



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**Holland**

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**News Release****May 10, 2007****For Immediate Release:**

## **Conservatives stack deck in favour of Pickering airport, giving review contract to GTAA**

The Conservative government has let the fox into the chicken coop by awarding a contract to the Greater Toronto Airports Authority to assess the need for an airport in Pickering, says Ajax-Pickering MP Mark Holland.

"This is a government that has taken conflict of interest to new extremes," says Holland. "The GTAA is not impartial. It is an interested stakeholder. Of course they're going to recommend in favour of an airport, and that's what this government wants."

Yesterday Transport Minister Lawrence Cannon announced with no fanfare the awarding to the GTAA of a contract to complete the previously announced Needs Assessment Study for an airport in Pickering.

According to Cannon, the Needs Assessment Study will update and extend previous work on the role and capacity of airports in southern Ontario and will be conducted over a six-month period. The findings will become part of Transport Canada's so-called "due diligence" review, which the minister claims will "independently check and verify assumptions and conclusions in all related planning studies."

"This is a total fraud," says Holland. "In September 2005, the Liberal Transport Minister promised a thorough and impartial due diligence review that would look at transportation needs throughout southern Ontario, and consider other alternatives such as Hamilton. This completely reverses that commitment."

In November 2004, the GTAA submitted a proposal to build a general aviation airport at Pickering that would be expanded to accommodate about 10 million passengers a year by 2032. Hamilton has been lobbying for overflow from Pearson International Airport to be sent to the existing John C. Munro International Airport instead of building a new airport in Pickering. The Hamilton airport is operated by a subsidiary of the Vancouver International Airport Authority, a rival to the GTAA, which operates Pearson and would operate Pickering.

Holland said he was also disturbed to read comments made by Cannon in Hamilton last week that seemed to support building a Pickering Airport instead of allowing Hamilton to take Pearson's overflow.

"This minister's riding is close to Mirabel, so he should know about white elephants, but he seems to have made up his mind," says Holland. "The process was supposed to be impartial and include public participation. This is a complete sham."

Holland has been trying since last summer to obtain documents about Transport Canada's "due diligence review" under the Access to Information Act, but the department has not turned over the documents. An inquiry by the Office of the Information Commissioner has determined that Transport Canada is in violation of the law.

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**For further information:**

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- [See Pickering Airport Lands issues page](#)

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