



March 12, 2025

**To: Regional Vice Presidents  
Branches & Facilities**

## **CATCA Quarterly Membership Update**

CATCA members,

We are pleased to provide you with a quarterly update on issues, progress and upcoming initiatives.

### **Staffing**

Understaffing remains the most significant issue confronting our workforce and our company. Last week we learned of a new staffing/overtime initiative that will be implemented by management in the ACC's and 4 majors towers. Briefings were conducted last week with numerous branches continuing with others this week. The basic concept is not new and has been employed before by NAV to address understaffing situations – sometimes with limited success and sometimes with spectacular failure. Essentially, the initiative aims to reduce the number of shifts scheduled per day in an attempt to even the number of staff across the schedule. In other words, by reducing the overtime shifts on weekdays, the hope is that there will be more uptake on weekends (or other undesirable shifts).

CATCA National was not consulted on this initiative in advance and that is a significant departure from how we have been doing business with the company of late. Although there are numerous policies and practices, we do not fully support, we are generally afforded the opportunity to provide our feedback and insights in advance, such that we may influence and improve the decision making for the benefit of all parties. Being excluded from an initiative as potentially disruptive as this, is very disappointing.

Beyond the lack of consultation, we have several concerns. First, we know that this will not be well-received by our members and will quite likely further erode any goodwill or member buy-in that exists. At the end of last summer, we were told we did an amazing job to make things work, and this year we are being met with a method to do even more with less. That means more pressure and work intensification for controllers and a further normalization of deviance and a certain path to failure. Coming on the heels of attempts to reduce leave entitlements, ongoing challenges regarding TOIL approvals, and a recent history on other attempted collective

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agreement assaults (care and nurturing denials, for instance), this all further alienates our workforce precisely at a time when they are needed most.

That impact alone will be enough to likely undermine service continuity and predictability going forward. However, under scrutiny, even with that aside, there are issues. The assumption that controllers who had previously filled shifts on weekdays will now automatically gravitate to other shifts fails to recognize that overtime uptake is influenced by numerous factors. This initiative also raises other questions such as, what staffing requirement numbers will be going forward, and how TOIL and ad-hoc leave will be treated. If we can 'get by' with a lower requirement, can we approve leave down to that requirement? What does 'requirement' even mean anymore?

We do not dispute the very real issue regarding staffing challenges on weekends and other undesirable shifts. Recognition of that problem is exactly why CATCA brought forward proposals in collective bargaining to address it. Intentionally reducing shifts on weekdays will not make weekends more attractive. In fact, the most likely effect will be to make weekdays less attractive than they are and thereby reduce overtime uptake on those days as well. Overall, we will be left with fewer hours worked at a time where we need to move in the opposite direction. This will likely achieve a more even impact on the operation day-to-day, but it will be a negative one. Controllers will now feel abandoned and overworked on all days. Restrictions, delays and TMI's will be spread across the entire week and safety and predictability eroded on all days. This is essentially a 'no good day' policy which will do little to eliminate the very bad days from our schedule. It is a lose-lose scenario with the potential to diminish our overall capacity further.

In our view, this is a blunt solution to a problem that requires a more nuanced approach that combines scheduling improvements, the right incentives, and proper consideration of the obstacles to overtime uptake and employee buy-in. Appreciating employee behavior begins with understanding that our workforce is comprised of different segments that respond variously to different levers. That is precisely the expertise that we can bring to this discussion that has gone unheard.

### **Regulatory Change and Lobby Efforts**

We are continuing to actively consult with TC regarding the development of regulations around fatigue and staffing and flow management. These items may have a significant impact on NAV and on controllers. We are taking steps to ensure that the final decisions on these regulations reflect our interests. These areas are in the early stages of development but are progressing rapidly with aggressive timelines defined.

Additionally, we have been collaborating on the discussions regarding possible amendments to the existing air passenger protection regulations. Lobby efforts with government and other stakeholders are continuing and we fully expect hard questions regarding staffing and service delivery. As the new staffing initiative takes effect, we expect those questions to become even more difficult and pointed if things don't work as projected.

In terms of media participation, we have taken a very muted approach of late because of the gravity of several recent aviation events and the growing fragility of public confidence in the aviation system. Ultimately, we are all committed to promoting a healthy aviation sector and that means we have to balance our desire to speak out with the responsibility to ensure that commentary is responsible and does not undermine our collective long- term interest.

### **CATCA Professional Standards Program**

Work on this initiative is continuing and we have identified a working group tasked with defining and developing what a CATCA PSP will look like and how it would work. We are targeting June completion with a further target of next fall to begin implementation. We have had a huge amount of positive feedback from members that this is finally progressing and share the excitement of what this might mean for our workplace once fully implemented.

### **Mental Health**

We continue to explore ways for CATCA to better support members in this regard and what programs we can introduce to enhance long-term wellness and resilience among our membership. The Executive board has recently undergone mental health first aid training and are developing a plan to roll this out to other union representatives. Additionally, the board is assessing an APP specifically designed to develop and improve resilience. This is a very important area and one in which CATCA can clearly do more to support our members. We are working hard to figure out the best way to make that happen.

### **Benefits Review**

As previously communicated, the review between the NCBAA and NAV has reached an impasse, and we are actively preparing for arbitration. Barring some new developments, the arbitration process should be getting underway in the coming months, and we will be advocating for an aggressive pace to try to get a resolution to this matter as soon as possible, given our members have been waiting far too long already.

### **Convention**

Preparations for convention continue. A dedicated convention website and Facebook page have been developed to keep members informed and can be found on the CATCA website or APP. More information will be shared as things progress. The organizing committee is working hard and all signs are that this will be a very exciting convention.

Members are also reminded that branch meetings should be upcoming for the purpose of developing policy and bylaw resolutions for CATCA. It's important that members participate to ensure that these resolutions are reflective of as broad a base of our membership as possible, and everyone's voice is heard. Ultimately, this is what our convention is about and should be taken very seriously.

In solidarity,

Nick von Schoenberg  
President

Scott Loder  
Executive Vice-President

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