

## Summarizing recent **ADVOCACY** activities of your association in Q3 2017

### FEDERAL

#### **Transport Canada and the Canadian Transportation Agency (CTA):**

Since the announcement on May 16, 2017 by Minister Marc Garneau on the proposal of a new Passenger Bill of Rights among other proposed changes to the Canadian Transportation Act, ACTA re-established our network and is taking an active approach to be involved in the Regulatory Modernization Initiative (RMI). The RMI was borne out of the Review of the Canadian Transportation Act that started in 2014. ACTA submitted feedback at that time (submission available in the resource section of the ACTA website) and had follow-up meetings with members of the Review Panel and CTA representatives in 2015. ACTA was cited in the government Report that was released in 2016 and received national media exposure upon release of the Report. The RMI is being approached in 4 phases: 1) Accessible transportation, 2) Air transportation, 3) Consumer protection for air travelers, 4) Rail transportation. On July 25<sup>th</sup>, ACTA participated in a meeting with CTA officials to review Phase 2 of the RMI. Much of this phase delves into areas of Air Transportation that would have greater impact on airlines. Consequently more involvement would be from our airline partners however, ACTA will contribute where warranted. The deadline to submit comments to Phase 2 is late summer.

On August 15<sup>th</sup>, ACTA was invited to have a private lunch with Minister Garneau and Mississauga, Ontario MP Omar Alghabra. The purpose of the meeting was to hear ACTA's input on the upcoming Bill C-49 concerning the passenger bill of rights, slated as Phase 3 in the RMI. Other talking points included much of what was cited in ACTA's submission: the need for a competitive but healthy travel industry in Canada, the reduction of taxes and airport fees to stop the drain of travelers from Canadian airports to USA border airports, and transparency in pricing. The meeting was very beneficial as a first meeting with the Minister. ACTA will continue to stay connected and involved as this Phase gets underway.

#### **International Air Transport Association (IATA):**

ACTA sits on IATA joint committees with equal representation between travel agency retailers and airlines. ACTA appoints retail members to sit on these committees including seven for the Agency Programme Joint Council (APJC). These members are senior representatives from leisure and corporate agencies across the country. The APJC met July 27<sup>th</sup> with agenda items including an update on PCI DSS (Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard) compliance, Agency Debit Memo (ADM) including Post billing disputes and an update on the ADM Working Group, an update on the Canada Travel Fraud Prevention Group and the IATA Settlement Systems (ISS) Statistics.

ACTA is working through the Financial Advisory Group (the F.A.G., a joint agency/airline sub-committee), to conduct a thorough review of the Local Financial Criteria (LFC). Several meetings have been held with the agency members of the F.A.G. and also the full group (agents and airlines) where the members have been going through the LFC, line by line. This process will take another few meetings. Agency members are working on drafting a strong proposal for an alternative to the submission of costly annual Review Engagement as requested by members. ACTA will keep the membership posted on the progress.

While IATA acknowledged ACTA and the global outcry to the June 1, 2017 implementation date for IATA appointed agencies to be Payment Card Industry (PCI) Data Security Standards (DSS) compliant, ACTA is taking measures to assist members in this process. A webinar was hosted on July 19, 2017 and reached maximum capacity. The recorded webinar is available on demand on the ACTA Campus.

#### **Insurance:**

Activity on this national initiative has relaxed since the release of the Canadian Council of Insurance Regulators (CCIR) Position Paper on May 31, 2017. From ACTA's perspective, the recommendations made by the CCIR do not immediately impact the retail travel industry community as they are directed to the Insurers to implement. However, as the Insurers begin to make these changes, travel agencies will hear from their respective Insurers to advise of any changes in their policies or processes. Training and education within the distribution channel of an Insurer is ultimately where retail travel agencies may see some changes. ACTA will continue to work closely with CCIR and our Travel Health Insurance Partners to keep members updated on the status of these industry recommendations.

## **PROVINCIAL**

### **Ontario:**

ACTA and the ACTA TIA Committee is fully involved in the Ontario government's Review of the Ontario Travel Industry Act (TIA). ACTA submitted feedback by the Phase 3 deadline of July 31<sup>st</sup> (submission available in the resource section of the ACTA website). According to the Ontario government Phase 2 Report, they may consider proposing additional changes to TIA or its regulation, or may reconsider some of the proposals outlined in the Report, depending on the feedback provided in Phase 3 of the Review. ACTA will monitor the progress of these next steps and be ready to get involved as the TIA Review concludes.

Last fall, ACTA responded to the Interim Report of the Ontario government's Review of the Employment Standards Act (submission available in the resource section of the ACTA website). On May 25<sup>th</sup>, the government released their final report with 173 recommendations about strengthening workplace safety, collective bargaining and wage fairness for part-time, casual, temporary, seasonal and contract employees. On May 30<sup>th</sup>, Premier Wynne announced increases in Minimum Wage. On June 1<sup>st</sup>, Bill 148 was introduced and referred to Committee. On June 5<sup>th</sup>, the Legislature closed for summer and resumes September 1<sup>st</sup>. While it would appear that the government has offered businesses the opportunity for further consultation, in the meantime, some key changes worth noting in Bill 148 proposes: vacation entitlement increase from two weeks to three, personal emergency leave changes for all workers rather than for those in companies with more than 50 employees, and new rules regarding scheduling. It's worth noting that none of the 173 recommendations suggested an increase to minimum wage. ACTA will continue to monitor this highly controversial Bill.

### **British Columbia:**

Working with the ACTA BC Regional Council, ACTA provided feedback to the Consumer Protection BC (CPBC) Fee Review by the August 4<sup>th</sup> deadline (submission available in the resource section of the ACTA website). ACTA emphasized that any increase, even one to address inflation, is not seen as favourable to BC ACTA member agencies. ACTA also noted that only 2% of the fees collected are spent on Education and Awareness. Increasing the promotion and awareness to consumers of the benefits of booking a BC travel agency, would go a long way to address any proposed increase in license fees. ACTA will advise of any announcements as impending changes would be expected for January 1, 2018.

### **Québec:**

At the June 20<sup>th</sup> ACTA Québec Council meeting, advocacy discussion focused on: 1) Fraud – engagement with ATOQ on this industry matter continues. This initiative has extended on a National level (more than ACTA's involvement with the IATA Canada Travel Fraud Prevention Group) and outreach to CATO, the Canadian Association of Tour Operators and will include ATOQ. 2) OPC – council's concern over listing of travel agents on consumer-facing OPC website due to potential for industry fraud. This will be discussed at the next OPC meeting (date to be advised). 3) The formations of working committees to address key concerns by members including fuel surcharges.

Ongoing issues being monitored also include the new legislation announced May 2, 2017, intended to modernize the Quebec *Consumer Protection Act* (CPA), as well as provide for new consumer protection measures. The CPA provisions on credit, in particular, are long overdue for change as they have not been significantly amended since 1978. ACTA will work, in cooperation with the Quebec council, on how this new legislation will impact ACTA members.

### **AB/SK/MB/Atlantic (unregulated provinces):**

ACTA continues to await word on next steps with the Alberta Insurance Council (AIC). The CEO of AIC met with ACTA and members of the Alberta Regional Council Insurance Sub-Committee in early 2017 and it was left to the AIC CEO to speak to other industry stakeholder groups on a national, multi-provincial or an Alberta approach to our concerns this summer. The AIC recognizes the change in the industry landscape and the need for the sale of travel insurance to accommodate these changes. The next Council meeting is scheduled for September 27, 2017.

With a new Regional Membership Manager for Western Canada, council meetings will be scheduled for **Saskatchewan** and **Manitoba** where provincial advocacy concerns will be assessed.

In the **Atlantic Provinces**, the Council met at the end of May where supplier issues was the focus. Q3 will see members look to next steps on some of the specified industry matters such as taxes, fees and surcharges. This touches on the national issues in front of the Canadian Transportation Agency today.