



October 13, 2022

Honourable Omar Alghabra, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Transport  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0A6

Honorable Billy Nolen  
Administrator (Acting)  
Federal Aviation Administration  
800 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Minister Alghabra and Acting Administrator Nolen,

On behalf of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), the world's largest aviation association and the Canadian Owners and Pilots Association (COPA), the world's third largest aviation association, we write to respectfully request Transport Canada authorize U.S. pilots flying under BasicMed privileges to enter Canadian airspace.

Like many General Aviation (GA) medical certification reforms in countries across the globe, BasicMed was designed to create a more efficient medical exam process for private pilots while maintaining safety. BasicMed has exceeded expectations since its implementation in 2016. To date, more than 75,000 pilots in the United States have completed the requirements to fly under this program and 50,000 pilots are actively using these privileges today. Moreover, Mexico, The Bahamas, and The Dominican Republic, for years, have welcomed U.S. pilots flying under BasicMed privileges.

BasicMed has demonstrated to be safe, viable, and growing amongst GA pilots in the United States. This medical certification has alleviated some of the workload performed by FAA Aviation Medical Examiners (AMEs) and assisted in the elimination of some of the medical certification backlog.

U.S. GA pilots flying under BasicMed must still receive an initial medical exam by an FAA designated AME and receive a U.S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Class Medical (the equivalent of a Class 3 medical in Canada). Once the initial 3<sup>rd</sup> Class Medical is obtained, a GA pilot has the option to move to BasicMed, which includes operating limitations for aircraft and also allows subsequent medical exams to be conducted by either an AME or a state licensed physician. The AME or state licensed physician must also complete and sign an FAA approved medical exam checklist. Any GA pilot with a cardiovascular, neurological, or psychological condition must undergo further examination by the FAA. Operating limitations for those flying under BasicMed include aircraft up to 6000lbs, indicated airspeed of 250knots, altitudes up to 18,000 feet MSL, and 5 passengers plus the pilot-in-command. And finally, BasicMed pilots are also required to complete an online medical education course every 24 calendar months.

The safety of BasicMed is further demonstrated in a 2021 FAA study, which concluded that there is not a significant overall difference in accident rates between those who utilize BasicMed or those carrying a 3<sup>rd</sup> Class Medical.

Authorizing U.S. GA pilots with BasicMed privileges to safely fly in Canada's airspace or adopting regulations in Canada will result in very similar outcomes, which is the ability to maintain safety, while also providing a more efficient medical exam process for private pilots. In addition, it will help reduce the burden and backlog for Transport Canada's medical evaluations process that are not only impacting GA pilots but commercial pilots as well.

It is our understanding that U.S. GA pilots operating under BasicMed are not permitted to operate in Canada, even if the airspace is U.S. controlled by agreement. We respectfully request Transport Canada and the FAA to modify existing, or create new, air traffic agreements that will authorize operations by U.S. GA pilots utilizing BasicMed privileges into Canadian airspace. As discussed above, the number of individuals in the U.S. utilizing BasicMed is growing rapidly and are doing so in a safe and viable fashion. Allowing these pilots to operate into Canadian airspace will promote safe operations near the U.S. and Canadian border and will support increased GA cross-border operations to provide greater economic and public benefit.

Canada remains one of the most popular international destinations for U.S. GA pilots, representing nearly 30% of all international GA flights each year. As we seemingly turn the page on the COVID pandemic and begin to further open our countries, we believe this request provides a unique opportunity. The increase in GA traffic and pilots into Canada would undoubtedly help businesses rebuild, provide opportunities for families to see one another, and allow tourism to again flourish with tens of thousands of border crossings by GA pilots each year.

Thank you for your timely and positive consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



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Mark Baker  
President and CEO  
Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association



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James Ferrier  
Interim President and CEO  
Canadian Owners and Pilots Association

cc: David Boulter, FAA Associate Administrator, Aviation Safety (Acting)  
Laurence Wildgoose, FAA Assistant Administrator for Policy, International Affairs, and Environment  
Susan E. Northrup, M.D., MPH, FAA Federal Air Surgeon  
Dr. Tyler Brooks, Transport Canada, Civil Aviation Medicine  
Felix Meunier, Transport Canada, Director General Civil Aviation