

# Dear Prime Minister and Canadian Premiers,

Canadians have rallied together in an unprecedented way to fight the common enemy that is COVID-19.

We heeded the calls of elected officials to respect social distancing rules, quarantines, isolations and other directives. Borders were closed and Canadians avoided all travel. Many businesses were shut down entirely. We stayed home and did what was necessary to flatten the curve.

In addition to the human tragedy resulting from the virus, the economic impact has also been unprecedented. Millions have lost their livelihoods. Businesses big and small are struggling to survive, and many will not.

We are now entering a new phase, one in which we must find a responsible way to co-exist with COVID-19 until there is a vaccine. This includes prudently and thoughtfully opening aviation and lifting restrictions to safely resume travel throughout all Provinces of Canada, as well as from select countries.

Other jurisdictions worldwide have introduced targeted measures and “safe” corridors or air bridges to lift travel restrictions and quarantines in a gradual and coordinated manner for regions or countries with infection rates under control. For example, the European Union just published guidelines on how to safely resume travel to the Schengen area. Bio-health and safety guidelines throughout the travel process must be clear and consistent to assure the confidence of travellers.

Last week, over 120 leaders in the Canadian travel, hospitality, and tourism sectors, called on governments to re-open travel as we head into the summer. They asked governments to begin relaxing travel restrictions and quarantine rules in Canada in a safe and targeted manner.

However, air travel is not only important for tourism—it is also critical for the entire Canadian economy. It is a key economic driver; it enhances the performance of local businesses, including many smaller ones that rely on a functioning supply chain. It influences investment decisions and supports the development of our industrial, knowledge-based and creative industries. With the existing restrictions, business travel has been virtually shut down.

As leaders of businesses who employ hundreds of thousands of Canadians, *we believe it's time to re-open our country to air travel in a safe, smart and measured way.* Our employees are relying on it, Canadians want it, and the Canadian economy depends on it.

It's time.

**#timetotravel**

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*Ed Sims*  
President and CEO  
**WestJet**

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