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For Immediate Release

Asthma Society of Canada applauds Canadian Transportation Agency decision regarding cats on planes, and calls for swift action by airlines

TORONTO – The Asthma Society of Canada applauded the decision, released yesterday, by the Canadian Transportation Agency (CTA) regarding the pet policies of Air Canada and WestJet. Responding to complaints filed against the two airlines, the CTA completed a thorough investigation of the policy which allows cat owners to carry their pet onboard the aircraft. Complaints were filed with the CTA claiming that the policy did not provide appropriate accommodation for their allergy, ruled a disability.

The Asthma Society of Canada, along with several other not-for-profit organizations, made a submission to the CTA in support of the claimants and specifically outlined ways in which the airlines could be compliant in providing the appropriate accommodation.

The decision handed down by the CTA gave the airlines 30 days to indicate whether they will implement either a ban on cats carried as pets in the aircraft cabin in which a person with an allergy to cats is travelling or ensure that aircraft air circulation systems meet an acceptable standard and institute a policy of seating separation which provides a minimum of five rows between the person and the cat on board the plane.

“This is a victory for allergy and asthma sufferers,” said Asthma Society of Canada President & CEO Robert Oliphant. “We are pleased that the CTA has chosen to adopt our recommendations which will ensure people with severe asthma may travel safely on airplanes,” Oliphant added.

The Asthma Society of Canada represents almost 3 million Canadians who suffer from Asthma and is focused on providing a balanced voice for asthma in Canada, advancing optimal self-management, prevention, research and health-care.

“We are eager and open to working with Air Canada and Westjet, and other airlines, to help them implement these new policies to create safe travel environments for all their passengers, including those who suffer from asthma and related allergies,” concluded Dr. Oliphant.”

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Contact:
Noah Farber
Asthma Society of Canada
416-787-4050 x100

T 416 787 4050

F 416 787 5807

E info@asthma.ca

124 Merton Street, Suite 401, Toronto, Ontario, M4S 2Z2 **Charitable Registration No.** 89853 7048 RR0001