



# Advocates for Safer Airports in Canada

August 8, 2025

**Hon. Scott Reid**

Minister of Environment and Climate Change  
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador  
Confederation Building  
P.O. Box 8700  
St. John's, NL A1B 4J6

**Re: Use of PFOS-Based Firefighting Foam During Deer Lake Aircraft Emergency Response**

Dear Minister Reid,

I am writing to raise serious environmental and public safety concerns regarding the use of outdated and hazardous firefighting foam during the recent aircraft emergency response near Deer Lake Regional Airport on July 26, 2025.

As reported publicly, the emergency response to the fatal plane crash involved airport firefighting vehicles using legacy AFFF (Aqueous Film Forming Foam) at 6% concentration, believed to contain PFOS and other PFAS chemicals. These “forever chemicals” have been banned in Canada due to their extreme persistence in the environment and known health risks, including bioaccumulation in drinking water sources and aquatic ecosystems.

This response occurred off-airport, placing the matter under provincial jurisdiction as per environmental oversight and hazardous substance discharge regulations. It is my understanding that no Incident Commander from the airport authority was present at the scene, despite the airport providing mutual aid support as the responding ARFF agency. This raises major questions about the chain of command, coordination, and environmental safeguards.

Additionally, there appears to be no indication of containment, remediation, or environmental follow-up regarding the discharge of PFOS-containing foam in proximity to the Humber River system, a vital Atlantic salmon watershed. If true, this represents a clear failure to align emergency response with current environmental protection standards.

I respectfully request the following:

1. That your department immediately review and investigate the type of firefighting foam used in the Deer Lake ARFF response and its environmental impact.
2. That steps be taken to ensure legacy AFFF products containing PFOS/PFAS are removed from active use in all airport and off-airport firefighting vehicles operating within Newfoundland and Labrador.
3. That a review be initiated of the Airport Emergency Plan to ensure provincial standards for hazardous materials response and environmental remediation are met — particularly for off-airport incidents where provincial oversight applies.
4. That your department provide public clarity on how such discharges are monitored, reported, and remediated when they involve provincially regulated land and waterways.

I believe this issue deserves urgent attention and transparency. Public trust in environmental protections depends on proactive and accountable action — especially when it comes to hazardous substances with long-term ecological impact.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I would appreciate a written response outlining what steps your office is prepared to take.

Sincerely,



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Vice Chair  
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cc. Leader of the Official Opposition – Tony Wakeham