

[www.harbourfrontcommunity.info](http://www.harbourfrontcommunity.info)  
*Media Advisory, Wed., Jan. 20, 2010*

## **Toronto Port Authority's Attitude on Airport Health Issues is "Startling, Appalling and Unprecedented" according to Toronto's Board of Health**

Describing the Port Authority's attitude to the City as "startling, appalling, and unprecedented", Toronto Board of Health Chair John Filion joined fellow Board members in unanimously insisting that the Port Authority start collecting and sharing data on pollutants from the Island Airport.

The January meeting of the Board of Health was held to discuss potential environmental health risks arising from Toronto's two airports - Pearson and Toronto Island Airport.

Three representatives from the Greater Toronto Airports Authority, which operates Pearson, delivered an informative presentation, which was commended by Board members. The Pearson Airport representatives spoke of their policies of transparency and community engagement, and the airport's commitment to reducing greenhouse gases to meet the challenge of climate change.

By contrast, the Toronto Port Authority, which operates the Island Airport, only a stone's throw from the Harbourfront Community, failed to respond to repeated requests from City public health staff for information.

Medical Officer of Health Dr. David McKeown reported to the Board that "Requests to provide information, or to obtain information...were not answered. Letters from the MOH ...requesting information from the airport did not produce a response."

The public meeting was attended by a large number of concerned citizens, many of whom addressed the Board.

Nancy Wo, a Bathurst Quay resident, and a parent at the Waterfront School, only 400 meters from the airport, described the airport's impact on her family:

"We live here. We spend all of our time here. We breathe polluted air. We are disturbed by noise: we have to close our windows to talk. We are endangered by traffic created by the airport. Why is Toronto's biggest taxi stand allowed on my once-quiet residential street?"

Her eight-year-old son Nigel told the Board what airport noise means to him: "At recess, we can't hear each other."

Another Bathurst Quay resident, Brenda Roman, described the impact of "always increasing" airport pollution on her own health. "It scares me," she said, asking the Board "to protect the health of all of us. The Island Airport should be shut down."

Heino Molls, who lives at Bathurst and Queen's Quay, described the airport's impact on his community as "extraordinary, overwhelming and out of control. If you don't help us," he told the Board, "this community is finished."

York Quay Neighbourhood Association spokesperson James Russell told the Board his association represents 11,000 residents along the waterfront from Yonge to Rees Street who welcome 12 million visitors a year to the waterfront. He described their experience:

“The Island Airport is growing out of control. Alarming pollution comes with it – air, water and noise pollution. It absolutely diminishes the value of the Waterfront as a place to live and play.

“We have condo buildings at the water’s edge, where conversation must stop every time a plane flies by. The air often reeks of fuel, which can be seen floating in the water. Concerts – especially in the Music Garden -- are interrupted by airplane noise every few minutes.”

A professional audio engineer and resident of Bathurst Quay, Max Moore presented the Board with community noise logs, documenting a constant stream of loud and very loud noise from the airport. As he said, “I don’t know if the airport is making us sick, but the noise is driving us crazy”.

Throughout the meeting, the Port Authority’s attitude to the communities surrounding the airport was frequently referred to by many deputants.

Joan Prowse, the Bathurst Quay Neighbourhood Association rep on the TPA’s noise committee described the Port Authority attitude as “abysmal. The TPA has little concern for the community around it.”

Corrie Galloway, speaking for the Bathurst Quay Neighbourhood Association, noted that “We don’t know if the TPA has similar policies to those at Pearson because they don’t communicate with us.”

Similarly, Pam Mazza, speaking for Community AIR, which monitors the airport for the community, recommended that the Board of Health pass resolutions forcing the island airport to take the health of this city more seriously:

“We are appalled that the Toronto Port Authority repeatedly ignores requests from your staff for its assistance in understanding health issues arising from the Airport’s expanding operations.

“For those of us who have worked on waterfront issues for a long time – and many of us have – this comes as no surprise, considering the way the Port Authority does things in this city.

“We have been treated with similar refusals from the Port Authority, refusing to be accountable to those it impacts, and the same lack of respect you have experienced, many many times by this federal port authority.”

Mazza congratulated the Board of Health for passing recommendations for monitoring and evaluating health issues at the island airport, including air pollution, noise pollution, water pollution, and Lake Ontario drinking water quality; with independent studies, and community involvement.