

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Class Action Lawsuit Certified Against Air Canada**

Class action lawsuits were certified yesterday in the Supreme Court of British Columbia against Air Canada and Air Canada Regional Inc. d.b.a. AIRBC on behalf of retired and former employees whose retirement or severance benefits were unilaterally changed by Air Canada and/or AIRBC.

The class action suits were brought by Michael Trainor and Gerri Andrews, both of Delta, British Columbia and Sonia Catherine Marie Halbert of Surrey, British Columbia.

The Plaintiffs in these class actions are part of a group of former Canadian Airlines and AIRBC employees who qualified for travel benefits under the airlines' Factor 60/70 program. These were employees who each had combined age and years of service of 60 or 70 with a minimum of 10 years of service with the airline.

Mr. Trainor, for example, was a factor 60 employee with Canadian Airlines and, in 1994, accepted a severance package from Canadian as part of its downsizing program. The package included reduced travel on Canadian Airlines as well as reduced cost travel on other airlines. The ability to fly on other airlines is known in the airline industry as interline travel. In September 2000 Air Canada unilaterally eliminated Mr. Trainor's right to travel at reduced cost on other airlines. The change affected approximately 1,500 former employees of Canadian Airlines and AIRBC. Mrs. Halbert retired from Canadian Airlines in August 2000. Ms. Andrews took early retirement from Air Canada/AIRBC in January 1996.

According to the Amended Statements of Claim filed in Vancouver, British

Columbia, "the sudden, harsh, and malicious manner of the change and the bad faith unilateral modification of the severance and retirement packages warrants the imposition of punitive and exemplary damages to punish the Defendants, and deter the Defendants from engaging in similar behavior." The Statements of Claim further allege that the plaintiffs accepted early retirement and severance packages with the knowledge that they would be free to travel the world both for pleasure and to visit friends and loved ones.

The lawsuit was filed behalf of Trainor, Halbert and Andrews by the law firms of Hanson Wirsig Matheos and Klein Lyons both of Vancouver. According to class action lawyer David Klein "the cavalier attitude with which Air Canada and Air Canada Regional have treated their former loyal and trusting employees cannot be allowed to continue without challenge and redress".

For further information contact: David Klein, Klein Lyons,  
Suite 1100 - 1333 West Broadway, Vancouver, B.C. V6H 4C1  
(604) 874-7171.