AIR CADET LEAGUE OF CANADA

LIGUE DES CADETS DE L'AIR DU CANADA

21 November 2026

STATEMENT REGARDING RECENT REDUCTION IN CADET PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

The Air Cadet League of Canada is deeply disappointed and seriously concerned by the recent reductions, postponements and cancellations of Cadet Program activities across Canada. These decisions threaten the quality, accessibility and long-term sustainability of one of Canada's most important youth development programs.

The Cadet Program provides exceptional opportunities for young Canadians to develop leadership, citizenship, confidence, resilience and valuable life skills. Practical training, competitions, aviation experiences and other specialized activities are essential elements of the cadet experience. Every cancelled activity represents a lost opportunity for our youth.

We acknowledge the Minister of National Defence's statement that overall funding for the Cadet Program has increased. Nevertheless, despite these increased investments, financial pressures within CJCR are resulting in reductions to activities that are fundamental to the Cadet Program.

We welcome the Minister's commitment to protecting core weekly programming. However, maintaining weekly parade nights is not the same as preserving the full Cadet Program. The experiences offered beyond weekly training are often those that have the greatest impact on a young person's development and future aspirations.

For more than eight decades, the Air Cadet League and its volunteers have mobilized community resources, established partnerships and provided essential logistical support to the program. These contributions complement those of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF); they do not replace them. The generosity of our communities, the dedication of our volunteers and the financial contributions of cadet families cannot and must not become substitutes for adequate federal funding. We acknowledge the Commander's assurance that the Leagues and families are not expected to compensate for reductions in CAF-funded activities.

The suspension of the enhanced Local Support Allocation funding trial is particularly concerning. It creates renewed financial uncertainty for our Provincial and Territorial Committees and Squadron Sponsoring Committees, many of which are already facing rising facility costs, limited fundraising capacity and volunteer shortages.

The League remains firmly committed to barrier-free access. A young Canadian's ability to participate in meaningful cadet experiences should not depend on the fundraising capacity of their community or their family's financial circumstances. The principle of barrier-free access must be supported by funding decisions and mechanisms that make it a practical reality.

We welcome the Minister's direction to review the Cadet Program's funding. We believe this review should examine the financial pressures affecting program delivery, assess how available resources are allocated, and identify options to restore priority training and development activities. The League stands ready to contribute constructively to this review, consistent with the collaborative framework established under our 2026 Memorandum of Understanding with the CAF.

The Air Cadet League and its thousands of dedicated volunteers remain unwavering in their commitment to supporting the Cadet Program. However, preserving the integrity of the program requires more than protecting its most basic activities. It requires adequate, stable and predictable funding that sustains the opportunities that make the program such a valuable investment in Canada's future.

Canada's young people deserve more than a commitment to opportunity. They deserve the investment necessary to make those opportunities a reality.



Jacquie Pepper-Journal
President
Air Cadet League of Canada

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Pierre Forgues
execdir@aircadetleague.com