

# CANADA REPORT

August 2025

## TRAVEL SOUTH USA



**Prepared By:**

**reach** REACH GLOBAL  
MARKETING LTD.

**370 King St West, Suite 452**

**Toronto, ON M5V 1J9**

**P 416-317-0838**

**W [reachglobal.ca](http://reachglobal.ca)**

**CHARMAINE SINGH**, *CEO & President*

**[charmaine@reachglobal.ca](mailto:charmaine@reachglobal.ca)**

**KARLY MELO**, *Account Director (PR & Marketing)*

**[karly@reachglobal.ca](mailto:karly@reachglobal.ca)**

**LAURA HERNANDEZ**, *Senior Account Specialist (Trade)*

**[laura@reachglobal.ca](mailto:laura@reachglobal.ca)**

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# I. Canada Overview

## Conference Board of Canada Data

- A little more than 8.16 million Canadians returned home from an overnight transborder trip throughout the first half of 2025, a 17.7 per cent drop compared to 2024. Trips by air neared 4.7 million, compared to 5.2 million last year (-11.2%). Canadians also made 3.3 million trips by auto during the period, a 30.6 per cent drop compared to 2024.
- The first two months of the summer travel season (May-June) saw 2.38 million Canadians return home from an overnight transborder trip, compared to 3.16 million in 2024 (-24.5%). The period saw auto trips decline by nearly one-third (-32.0%), while non-auto travel fell 16.9 per cent.
- This is a 14.6% increase in June compared to May outbound travel to the U.S.

## Economic Landscape

- Carney says he's focused on building up Canada but talks with U.S. continue
- Canada removing retaliatory tariffs on CUSMA-compliant U.S. goods
- Ontario sheds manufacturing jobs as tariff impacts surface, report says
- Canada's inflation rate slows to 1.7% in July, raising odds of BoC rate cut
- Ontario ordering public servants back into office full time
- Canadian dollar steadies near a three-month low as investors take stock of recent moves

## Travel Trade + Airlines Updates

- Air Canada flight attendants to vote on deal as some voice dissent
- Tentative Air Canada deal to include pay increases, at least 60 minutes ground pay
- Air Canada making changes to how members earn Aeroplan Points

## II. Executive Summary

- Trade sales calls
- Marketing
- Media meetings
- Monitoring market landscape

[illegible]

# 1. COMMUNICATION & PR

Communication & PR	Annual KPIs Target	KPI Achieved This Month	KPI Achieved to Date
Media Meetings	50	11	17
No. of Articles Generated	60	7	13
Impressions	55,000,000	1,035,240	9,986,758
Global Media Marketplace & FAMs	7	-	-
Travel South USA PR Newsletters	10	-	-
Open rate for Newsletters/leads generated	20%	-	-
Facebook	40	-	-
Instagram	20	-	-

## Media Coverage

- FY25-26 CoverageBook: <https://travelsouthusa.coveragebook.com/b/cc3dd1a010f4af6e>
- Earned Media Tracker: [https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1iXIVVSoZhnK86xS29VGUxHSqco5zGrCu/edit?usp=drive\\_link&ouid=100437309667561831242&rtpof=true&sd=true](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1iXIVVSoZhnK86xS29VGUxHSqco5zGrCu/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=100437309667561831242&rtpof=true&sd=true)

## Media Contacts (phone calls, emails, personal meetings)

Contacts	Publication	Meeting Notes & Interest	Follow-up/Next step
Heather Greenwood Davis	Freelance	Interested in cultural immersion stories and multi-gen family travel. Looking for narratives that blend city experiences with outdoor escapes.	Send suggested family-friendly and immersive storylines; flag upcoming wellness/wellbeing activations.
Catherine Dawson March	Globe and Mail	Focused on unique destination coverage that ties into broader lifestyle pieces. Very interested in food and wine stories, particularly new culinary festivals.	Share press release on new culinary events in the South; pitch chef profiles and farm-to-table angles.
Cynthia McClead	Toronto Sun	Seeks mainstream, reader-friendly content. Likes golf, beach resorts,	Pitch golf info (Jon McCarthy connection too);

		and activities that mix leisure with soft adventure.	send list of new resort openings and unique golf packages.
Tammy Cecco	Travel Life	Drawn to aspirational luxury and wellness content. Curious about boutique hotels and spa offerings.	Share info on luxury and wellness properties.
Teresa Greco	Preferred Magazine	Covers luxury lifestyle, with focus on cultural experiences and exclusive travel. Interested in elevated, one-of-a-kind itineraries.	Pitch exclusive culinary and art itineraries.
Doug Wallace	Freelance	Interested in LGBTQ+ travel experiences, boutique stays, and nightlife. Possibly highlight inclusivity across Southern destinations.	Share LGBTQ+ friendly itineraries, festivals, and properties.
Maryam Siddiqi	Freelance	Focused on experiential storytelling – particularly wellness, nature, and authentic encounters.	Send pitch angles on outdoor adventures, wellness escapes, and community-driven travel stories.
Sabrina Pirrilo	Freelance	Covers family travel, accessible luxury, and unique cultural programming.	In consideration for Global Summit 2026.
Liz Campbell	Freelance	Strong interest in culinary and heritage tourism. Wants storylines tied to Southern history through food.	Provide background on Southern food traditions (BBQ, farm-to-table, music-linked dining experiences); pitch food heritage angles.
Deepi Harish	Freelance	Covers lifestyle and wellness for South Asian Canadian outlets. Interested in diversity and cultural experiences.	Share story ideas on Southern cultural festivals and wellness offerings; propose diversity-focused angle.
Jennifer Merrick	Freelance	Focused on educational and cultural family travel.	Send details on cultural attractions, museums, and interactive family experiences across the South.

### Global Media Marketplace & Summit 2026

NAME	PUBLICATION	STATUS	EXPECTED COVERAGE	FAM CHOICE

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## **Editorial Newsletter**

- Resuming in September 2025

## **Social Media**

- Launching September 2025

## **Mini-Media Mission**

From September 22 to 25, Travel South USA will lead a high-impact intimate media mission across Toronto and Montreal, hosted by President & CEO Liz Bittner. Centered around the curated theme "Table of 12: Food for Thought," this mission is designed to foster intimate, meaningful conversations with top-tier Canadian media through the universal language of Southern hospitality and cuisine.

Over shared meals and signature Southern flavours, we'll spotlight the region's culinary depth, cultural richness, and diverse storytelling opportunities—connecting editors to the soul of the South. With a focus on slow travel, local voices, and road trip-ready itineraries, the mission will reinforce Travel South's distinct identity in a crowded market.

In today's Canadian landscape, personalized, under-the-radar experiences are what resonate—especially among younger, culturally curious audiences. These intimate gatherings aim to cut through the noise, build editorial relationships that convert to coverage, and position the South not just as a destination, but as a feeling worth discovering.

## **Marketing**

### **Baxter Media**

#### **Participating partners:**

- Arkansas— <https://www.travelcourier.ca/autumn-in-arkansas-is-always-a-good-idea/>
- Kentucky - <https://www.travelcourier.ca/kentuckys-september-soundtrack-where-music-mountains-and-bourbon-meet/>
- South Carolina – launching September
- West Virginia - <https://www.travelcourier.ca/west-virginia-has-year-round-appeal-for-canadian-travellers/>

**Platform:** *TravelCourier.ca*

**Timing:** 2-month campaign (August & September)

**Purpose:** *This campaign replaces the previously planned agent trainings for the above states.*

#### **Components:**

- 1 Baxter produced article, optional 3 additional State produced articles
- Banner Ads (rotated throughout microsite during each 2-week feature)
- Email Blasts to Canadian travel agents
- Social Media Posts via Baxter Media channels

# I. LEISURE SALES

Leisure Sales Measures	Annual KPIs Target	KPI Achieved This month	KPI Achieved to Date
<b>Tour operator meetings</b> <i>*focus on top 20 and grow CAA club partnerships</i>	20	6	15
<b>International Showcase &amp; FAMs participants</b>	4	2	5
<b>Travel South Travel Trade Newsletter</b>	10	-	-
<b>Open rate for Newsletters/leads generated</b>	25%	-	-

## Leisure Contacts (phone calls, emails, personal meetings)

Name	Company	Purpose of Meeting	Follow-up/Next step
Lise Seprus	Senior Discovery Tours	Discussed the Int'l Showcase and booking trends. They reported an uptick in some US tours but declined participation this year, citing a soft demand. They remain open to future collaborations and expressed interest in participating in 2026.	Follow up on any additional information required.
Connor Hoskins	See-Sight Tours	Reported that travel demand to St. Louis is strong, and the tour they launched in May has been performing very well. They are open to expanding their portfolio for the winter season and mentioned that overall business has been going very well. Their current focus is on small group tour experiences, and they highlighted a significant increase in demand for walking tours, which have seen rapid growth. Awaiting confirmation on participation for Intl Showcase.	Follow up on any additional information required.
Etienne Morissette	Makwa	Reported a soft period, averaging 4–7 student group	Follow-up scheduled for the training



		<p>departures annually for other destinations. Focus on educational trips for students 15–17, \$3,500–\$4,000 CAD all-inclusive. Peak travel: March Break, Easter, late June/July. Popular destinations: Costa Rica, Italy, Greece, Morocco. Slight uptick in U.S. interest, but demand remains low due to school board approvals. Discussed training on South offerings. Declined Int'l Showcase due to scheduling, open to future collaboration in 2026.</p>	<p>session, likely Nov-Dec, as they are currently preparing for another destination launch.</p>
Shirley Bu	Voyages Vasco	<p>Confirmed participation in the International Showcase. Reported that U.S. travel is gradually picking up, though still below expectations. They continue to see strong performance in cruises and vacation packages and are open to expanding their product and receiving sales support to better position the South within their U.S. leisure offerings</p>	<p>Ongoing follow up on event logistics</p>
Kim Patterson	Hidden Journeys	<p>Shared that while they do not currently feature tours to the South, there is growing interest particularly for multi-state trips. They have noticed some increasing demand for certain Southern destinations such as Georgia, SC/NC, Kansas City, and New Orleans, and are open to learning more about opportunities to expand their South offerings.</p>	<p>Follow up on any additional information required.</p>
Diksha Mahajan	Riya Travel	<p>Mentioned seeing a slow returning interest in U.S. destinations (Hawaii, New York, Niagara Falls, and Orlando). Travelers are looking for immersive cultural experiences, scenic routes,</p>	<p>Follow up on any additional information required.</p>

		and niche accommodations. They will consider the South once the US volume will be higher. Declined attendance to Int Showcase due to a scheduling conflict. They hope to attend next year.	
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## Newsletters

- Resuming in September

## International Showcase 2025

NAME	COMPANY	STATUS
Dan Sombach	AMA Travel	Confirmed & Registered
Terry Kaszas	CAA SASKATCHEWAN	Confirmed & Registered
Ted Davis	Baxter Media (journalist)	Confirmed & Registered
Shirley Bu	Voyages Vasco	Confirmed
Marlee-Rose Jourdain	MAKWA	Confirmed
Connor Hoskins	See-Sight Tours	<i>Tentative</i>
Lise Seprus	Senior Discovery Tours	Declined - due to ongoing US market challenges
Matthiew Madeiros	Travel Best Bet	Declined —limited staff due to conflicts with peak booking season.
Christine Paulin	Voyages Gendron	Declined - scheduling conflicts with peak booking season.
Michelle Boucher	Authentik USA	Declined – due to low demand on US travel combined with scheduling conflicts
Sophie Labelle	CAA Quebec	Declined - due to ongoing US market challenges and focus on performing destinations.
Etienne Moissette	Omnitour	Declined —due to school board advisories.
Tim Macdonell	Elite Sports Tours	Declined – already traveling/conflicts with peak sports season.
Al Qanun	Comfort Tour	Declined - limited staff and slower US sales led

		to a decision not to attend this year.
Maryssa Lessard	GVQ	Declined – attended last year, hopes to return for 2026 when demand is back up.
Julien Yessine	Expression Voyages	Declined - attended last year. The focus is shifted to other markets as US bookings slowly recover.
Hayden Nagel	NHG Tours	Declined – limited operational bandwidth.
Blair Jerrett	Maritime Travel	Declined - blackout travel dates due to peak on holiday season
Simone James	TravelBrands	Declined – limited operational bandwidth.
Yves Banville	Tours Chanteclerc	Declined – limited operational bandwidth.
Fanny Spanu	Toundra Voyages	Declined —limited staff due to conflicts with peak booking season.

## Looking Ahead at September 2025

### Communication & PR

- **Ongoing media meetings** and **pitching** to obtain coverage.
- **Executing** an approved plan for mini-media mission in September.
- **Managing** social content calendar.

### Leisure Sales

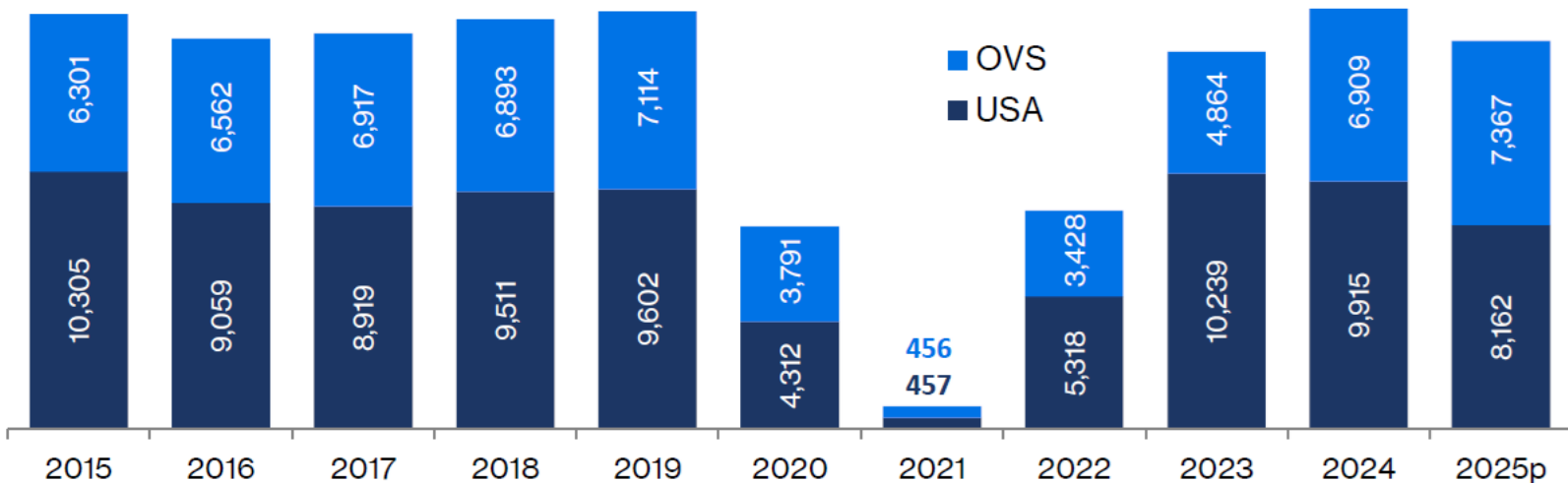
- **Coordinate** travel and **logistics** for confirmed buyers and media for the 2025 International Summit

## Market Update

### CONFERENCE BOARD OF CANADA DATA

- A little more than 8.16 million Canadians returned home from an overnight transborder trip throughout the first half of 2025, a 17.7 per cent drop compared to 2024. Trips by air neared 4.7 million, compared to 5.2 million last year (-11.2%). Canadians also made 3.3 million trips by auto during the period, a 30.6 per cent drop compared to 2024.
- The first two months of the summer travel season (May-June) saw 2.38 million Canadians return home from an overnight transborder trip, compared to 3.16 million in 2024 (-24.5%). The period saw auto trips decline by nearly one-third (-32.0%), while non-auto travel fell 16.9 per cent.
- **This is a 14.6% increase in June compared to May outbound travel to the U.S.**

**Overnight Travel<sup>1</sup> (000s of trips)**  
(Jan-June, each year)



### ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE

- [Carney says he's focused on building up Canada but talks with U.S. continue](#) (Global News)
  - Prime Minister Mark Carney reaffirmed that Canada is focused on strengthening its domestic economy amid rising trade tensions after U.S. President Trump raised tariffs on Canadian goods from 25% to 35%. While products under CUSMA remain exempt, the broader escalation—part of Trump's global tariff hike on over 60 countries—has increased economic uncertainty. Carney emphasized prioritizing Canadian economic growth while continuing negotiations with the U.S., but divisions remain among provincial leaders on counter-tariffs. Despite political friction, economists note that with up to 90% of goods exempt, the direct economic impact is limited for now, though risks to exports, manufacturing, and cross-border commerce remain elevated.

- [Canada removing retaliatory tariffs on CUSMA-compliant U.S. goods](#) (CBC News)
  - Canada will remove retaliatory tariffs on CUSMA-compliant U.S. goods starting Sept. 1, easing trade tensions with the U.S. However, tariffs on steel, aluminum, and autos remain in place as negotiations continue. This move affects a wide range of U.S. consumer goods previously hit by Canada's counter-tariffs and aims to protect Canadian industries, stabilize prices, and strengthen Canada's position ahead of the 2026 CUSMA review. While 85% of Canada-U.S. trade remains tariff-free, industries tied to steel, aluminum, and auto manufacturing will continue to face higher costs until a broader trade resolution is reached.
- [Ontario sheds manufacturing jobs as tariff impacts surface, report says](#) (CBC News)
  - Ontario's economy is feeling the impact of U.S. tariffs, with the province shedding 38,000 jobs in Q2 2025, including 29,400 in manufacturing — the sharpest quarterly decline since 2009 (excluding the pandemic). The unemployment rate rose to 7.8%, its highest since 2012, with Windsor hit hardest at 11.2% due to its heavy manufacturing base. In response, the Ford government launched a \$1B Protect Ontario Financing Program to support businesses affected by tariffs, alongside \$70M in employment and training supports. Despite these measures, critics argue the province lacks a long-term plan to protect jobs as trade tensions continue to pressure Ontario's economy.
- [Canada's inflation rate slows to 1.7% in July, raising odds of BoC rate cut](#) (The Globe and Mail)
  - Canada's inflation rate slowed to 1.7% in July from 1.9% in June, driven largely by falling gasoline prices following the removal of the carbon price. Rising grocery costs (+3.4% YoY) and shelter prices (+3% YoY, including a 5.1% rent increase) remain pressure points. The softer inflation reading has boosted market expectations for a Bank of Canada rate cut on Sept. 17, with odds rising to 36% from 26%. While U.S. tariffs are weighing on exports, exemptions under CUSMA have cushioned the overall impact, and the BoC suggests Canada can likely avoid a recession if conditions remain stable.
- [Ontario ordering public servants back into office full time](#) (CBC News)
  - Ontario will require 60,000 provincial public servants to return to the office four days a week starting Oct. 20, 2025, before transitioning to full-time in-office work by Jan. 5, 2026. Premier Doug Ford says the move will boost productivity and support downtown businesses impacted by remote work. The decision aligns with similar policies by major banks (RBC, BMO, Scotiabank, TD) but faces pushback from unions like AMAPCEO and OPSEU, which argue hybrid work improves productivity, retention, and well-being.
- [Canadian dollar steadies near a three-month low as investors take stock of recent moves](#) (The Globe and Mail)
  - The Canadian dollar held steady on August 20, trading at 1.3865 per USD (~72.12 U.S. cents) after briefly touching a three-month low at 1.3883. The decline followed July's softer inflation data, which boosted market bets on a Bank of Canada interest rate cut. Odds of a cut by October rose to 70% from 56% pre-report. Traders are watching the 1.3880 resistance level closely; a breakout

could push the loonie toward 1.40. Lower Canadian bond yields also reflect growing expectations of monetary easing.

## **AIRLINE UPDATES**

- [Air Canada flight attendants to vote on deal as some voice dissent](#) (The Globe and Mail)
  - Air Canada flight attendants will vote Aug. 27–Sept. 6 on a tentative deal after a three-day strike. The agreement adds pay for previously unpaid pre-departure work, but wages remain disputed, with attendants unhappy over a 17–20% increase versus pilots' 42% raise in 2024. The union urges approval, while some push for arbitration to seek higher pay.
- [Tentative Air Canada deal to include pay increases, at least 60 minutes ground pay](#) (CBC News)
  - Air Canada reached a tentative deal with its flight attendants, ending the strike that disrupted over 500,000 passengers. The agreement includes ground pay, compensation for at least 60 minutes before flights, plus 12% immediate raises for attendants with five years or less of service and 8% for senior staff, with gradual increases over four years. Operations are gradually resuming, but flight cancellations will continue for several days as schedules stabilize. The deal still requires union ratification, leaving the possibility of further disruptions if rejected.
- [Air Canada making changes to how members earn Aeroplan Points](#) (Travelpress)
  - Starting Jan 1, 2026, Aeroplan will shift to a spend-based model, earning 1 point per \$1 spent on eligible flights. A new Status Qualifying Credits (SQC) system will also launch, allowing members to qualify for Elite Status through flight spending, credit card use, and partner activities. Elite members earn 2x–6x points, with milestone perks unlocked every 10,000 SQC.

## **Air Canada**

Route	Change in frequency	Previous month's frequency	Frequency from September 1
Toronto to <b>Atlanta</b> (ATL)	Decrease	3x daily	2x daily
Montreal to <b>Atlanta</b> (ATL)	Increase	1x daily	2x daily
Toronto to <b>Charlotte</b> (CLT)	Increase	No direct flights	3x daily
Toronto to <b>Nashville</b> (BNA)	Increase	1x daily	2x daily
Montreal to <b>Nashville</b> (BNA)	None	1x daily	1x daily

Toronto to <b>Raleigh</b> (RDU)	Increase	1-2x daily	2x daily
Montreal to <b>Raleigh</b> (RDU)	decrease	1-2x daily	1x daily
Toronto to <b>St. Louis</b> (STL)	None	1-2x daily	1-2x daily
Montreal to <b>St. Louis</b> (STL)	None	1x daily	1x daily
Toronto to <b>Charleston</b> (CHS)	decrease	1-2x daily	1x weekly
Vancouver to <b>Charlotte</b> (CLT)	None	No direct flights	No direct flights

#### Air Transat

Route	Change in frequency	Previous month's frequency	Frequency from September 1
Toronto to <b>Charleston</b> (CHS)	None	No direct flights	No direct flights
Vancouver to <b>Charlotte</b> (CLT)	None	No direct flights	No direct flights

#### Flair

Route	Change in frequency	Previous month's frequency	Frequency from September 1
Edmonton to <b>Nashville</b> (BNA)	None	No direct flights	No direct flights
Toronto to <b>Nashville</b> (BNA)	None	No direct flights	No direct flights
Toronto to <b>Charleston</b> (CHS)	None	No direct flights	No direct flights
Vancouver to <b>Charlotte</b> (CLT)	None	No direct flights	No direct flights

#### Porter Airlines

Route	Change in frequency	Previous month's	Frequency from
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		frequency	September 1
Toronto to <b>Charleston</b> (CHS)	None	No direct flights	No direct flights
Vancouver to <b>Charlotte</b> (CLT)	None	No direct flights	No direct flights

#### WestJet

Route	Change in frequency	Previous month's frequency	Frequency from September 1
Calgary to <b>Atlanta</b> (ATL)	None	2x daily	2x daily
Vancouver to <b>Atlanta</b> (ATL)	None	2x daily	2x daily
Toronto to <b>Nashville</b> (BNA)	Decrease	1x daily	No direct flights
Vancouver to <b>Nashville</b> (BNA)	None	No direct flights	No direct flights
Calgary to <b>Nashville</b> (BNA)	None	1x daily	1x daily
Toronto to <b>Charleston</b> (CHS)	None	No direct flights	No direct flights
Vancouver to <b>Charlotte</b> (CLT)	None	No direct flights	No direct flights

Updated WestJet route schedule:

<https://www.westjet.com/en-ca/book-trip/direct-flights/index>

#### American Airlines

Route	Change in frequency	Previous month's frequency	Frequency from September 1
Toronto to <b>Charlotte</b> (CLT)	Increase	4x daily	6x daily
Montreal to <b>Charlotte</b> (CLT)	None	2x daily	2x daily
Vancouver to <b>Charlotte</b> (CLT)	None	1x daily	1x daily
Toronto to <b>Charleston</b> (CHS)	None	No direct flights	No direct flights



**JetBlue**

Route	Change in frequency	Previous month's frequency	Frequency from September 1
Toronto to <b>Charleston</b> (CHS)	None	No direct flights	No direct flights
Vancouver to <b>Charlotte</b> (CLT)	None	No direct flights	No direct flights

**Delta Air Lines**

Route	Change in frequency	Previous month's frequency	Frequency from September 1
Toronto to <b>Atlanta</b> (ATL)	Decrease	5x daily	4x daily
Montreal to <b>Atlanta</b> (ATL)	Decrease	3x daily	2x daily
Toronto to <b>Charleston</b> (CHS)	None	No direct flights	No direct flights
Vancouver to <b>Charlotte</b> (CLT)	None	No direct flights	No direct flights

**United Airlines**

Route	Change in frequency	Previous month's frequency	Frequency from September 1
Toronto to <b>Charleston</b> (CHS)	None	No direct flights	No direct flights
Vancouver to <b>Charlotte</b> (CLT)	None	No direct flights	No direct flights