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BIS-2025-0027
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June 3, 2025

Via Regulatory Portal

Ms. Julia Khersonsky
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Strategic Trade
Bureau of Industry and Security
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20230

cc. Mr. Stephen Astle, Director, Defense Industrial Base Division, Office of Strategic Industries and Economic Security

Re: Notice of Request for Public Comments on Section 232 National Security Investigation of Imports of Commercial Aircraft and Jet Engines and Parts for Commercial Aircraft and Jet Engines

Dear Ms. Khersonsky,

Airlines for America (A4A) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Bureau of Industry and Security's (BIS) *Notice of Request for Public Comments on Section 232 National Security Investigation of Imports of Commercial Aircraft and Jet Engines and Parts for Commercial Aircraft and Jet Engines*, 90 Fed. Reg. 20273-20274 (May 13, 2025) (the "Notice").

A4A is the trade association for the leading U.S. airlines[1], both passenger and cargo carriers, prioritizing safety and security during this time of large passenger volumes and increased reliance on air cargo shipments. Every day, U.S. airlines operate 27,000 flights carrying 2.7 million travelers to and from 80 countries and carry 61,000 tons of cargo to and from approximately 220 countries. The tremendous global footprint and reach of U.S. commercial aviation contributes 5 percent U.S. GDP and supports 10 million U.S. jobs.[2]

In 2024 alone, 5 percent of U.S. GDP contributed by commercial aviation equated to approximately $1.46 trillion in economic benefit to the U.S economy.[3],[4] Today, commercial aviation is the foundation of modern commerce. Without air travel and cargo, it is virtually impossible to create commerce in many other industries. In fact, along with homebuilding, airlines have the largest multiplier conduit to commerce in the economy, and the fortunes of many businesses and workers throughout the travel and tourism economy are dependent on a healthy, stable and predictable aviation system.

U.S. commercial aviation's contributions to U.S. economic security comes as the result of several overarching policies that provide a global framework for U.S. competitiveness, innovation and prosperity.

- The first and core component is safety. Aviation safety is the bedrock principle from which our industry operates, and commercial air travel remains the safest mode of transportation in the world because of the collaborative and collective focus.

[1] A4A's members are: Alaska Air Group, Inc.; American Airlines Group, Inc.; Atlas Air Worldwide Holdings, Inc.; Delta Air Lines, Inc.; FedEx Corp.; Hawaiian Airlines; JetBlue Airways Corp.; Southwest Airlines Co.; United Airlines Holdings, Inc.; and United Parcel Service Co. Air Canada is an associate member.
[2] A4A, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, Diio by Cirium and company literature.
[3] The Economic Impact of Civil Aviation on the U.S. Economy (Federal Aviation Administration, August 2022) – available at https://www.faa.gov/about/plans_reports#eir
[4] U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis -- https://www.bea.gov/data/gdp/gross-domestic-product

- A second key component to U.S. commercial aviation success has been that the U.S. aviation industry has operated in a zero-tariff environment for Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)-certified products under the *Agreement on Trade in Civil Aircraft (ATCA)* for nearly 50 years. ATCA also eliminated tariff and non-tariff barriers on civil aircraft, engines, flight simulators, and parts and components for civil aircraft and has led to a U.S. civil aviation industry net positive export trade balance of $104 billion, with exports of $124 billion and imports of $20 billion, in 2024 alone.[5]

The U.S. civil aviation industry is the success story that President Trump is looking for as it leads civil aerospace globally as shown by the sectoral trade surplus of $104 billion. Breaking that down, the math shows that U.S. made goods are 84% of total aerospace trade, while 16% are foreign made. The U.S. does not need to fix the 16%, instead, the focus should be put on building upon the positive reciprocal framework that has enabled the U.S. to reach this pinnacle position of global strength and leadership. We have nearly 50 years of history under ATCA which has resulted in exports growing by an incredible 2,100%. The U.S. civil aerospace story has been wildly successful and the payback of being leaders in innovation has led to high paying U.S. jobs and economic success that must be protected and strengthened to reach new heights and pave the way for continued global superiority. The current trade framework has enhanced our economic and national security and is a critical component to maintaining our national security moving forward.

U.S. Defense Preparedness is Undermined by Tariffs on a Weak Supply Chain

The close relationship between the Department of Defense (DOD) and U.S. manufacturers provides an important point of collaboration that enables the development of next-generation aircraft and propulsion technologies. DOD also relies on the same supply chain and workforce that commercial aerospace utilizes which creates efficiencies of scale and reduces costs. The discussion below on supply chain outlines the concerns about an already fragile supply chain and reinforces the need for stability. The commercial aerospace industrial base is foundational for DOD air capabilities. Imposing tariffs on a weakened supply chain will diminish national security by undermining U.S. DOD air capabilities.

The U.S. commercial airline industry supports President Trump's goal of reducing the U.S. trade deficit. However, the commercial aviation sector is unique, and by maintaining existing duty-free trade policies and fostering the aviation global supply chain, the U.S. can continue to take advantage and tout its trade surplus.

Expanding on the points above, we urge BIS to consider the following factors in its Section 232 investigation:

A Reciprocal Zero-Tariff Environment Provides a Framework for U.S. Leadership in Manufacturing and Safety

The ATCA has been a critical foundation for U.S. leadership across the globe in aviation. In the 1970s, the U.S. was, of course, the leader in aerospace manufacturing and exports it. But the U.S. started encountering trade barriers, not unlike some of the policies that the President is identifying and targeting today, both tariff and non-tariff barriers. At that time, there were several different manufacturers that were competing, but the U.S. was the clear dominant player in global aviation manufacturing. Given that leadership, other manufacturers, like Airbus started to develop, the Brazilians were starting to come online, and the Japanese were seeking ways to excel in manufacturing. Countries were looking for an alternative to the tariff and non-tariff trade barriers that existed. It was U.S. leadership that brought 33

[5] Source: International Trade Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce

countries together to enter into the ATCA agreement on civil aviation in terms of trade that provided for a reciprocal zero-for-zero tariff framework which was overwhelmingly passed and ratified by Congress in 1979.

ATCA was then incorporated into the Harmonized Tariff Schedule and formally launched a U.S. export juggernaut that we see the results that continue today. An enhanced and expanded zero-tariff framework could make improvements in this approach and establish President Trump's articulated vision of a fair and reciprocal balanced approach to trade that results in U.S. supremacy. President Trump could utilize bilateral deals, such as the recently concluded negotiation with the United Kingdom, to establish a fair and reciprocal zero-tariff framework with like-minded countries. This framework has become the unstated assumption for many decades of trade law for U.S. aerospace manufacturing and the supply chain. The results have been undeniably successful: Exports have grown over 2,100% since 1980, resulting in an incredible industrial capacity base, not just on the civil side, but also intertwined with the defense side and providing an enormous amount of economic security and national security. Rather than imposing tariffs on countries who trade under ATCA, the Administration should be re-doubling efforts to get more countries to accede to that agreement, supercharging the benefits that the U.S. aerospace industry has seen under the agreement to date.

In addition to ATCA, international cooperation and connectivity has played a critical role in aviation safety through bilateral agreements that facilitate the reciprocal airworthiness certification of civil aeronautical products imported/exported between two signatory countries. In particular, Bilateral Aviation Safety Agreements provide for cooperation in a variety of aviation areas, including maintenance, flight operations, and environmental certification.[6]

These bilateral aviation agreements are crucial for international aviation, providing the legal framework for airlines to operate across borders and ensuring aviation safety. These agreements facilitate air travel and trade by establishing rights and obligations for airlines. Akin to ATCA, this framework of agreements has led to commercial aviation not only being the safest mode of transportation in the world but also U.S. primacy in trade and exports.

Aviation Safety Could be Jeopardized by a Fractured Supply Chain

It is important to note that in order for products to be classified as eligible for the zero-for-zero treatment, the manufacturer must produce an FAA certified product. That product must then be recognized, accepted, or produced here in the U.S. under the FAA certification process. So, ATCA not only leveled the playing field, but it has raised the aviation safety bar globally. Under the framework importers have to keep a record and demonstrate the fact that their product is an FAA certified product. The FAA plays a critical role in all this, and the safety angle cannot be overstated. If the U.S. moves away from this regime, we are not only moving away from the U.S. competitive leadership that ATCA has brought forth in the aerospace industry but also moving away from the FAA being the standard bearer in aviation safety.

A Stable Global Supply Chain Creates Jobs and Enhances Safety

Every day, U.S. airlines operate 27,000 flights carrying 2.7 million travelers to and from 80 countries and carry 61,000 tons of cargo to and from approximately 220 countries. In order to carry out this highly logistical global framework the commercial aviation industry relies on a complex network of suppliers across multiple countries.

[6] https://www.faa.gov/aircraft/air_cert/international/bilateral_agreements/overview

As noted in a recent Congressionally directed Task Force on supply chain resiliency, U.S. airlines depend on a globally integrated and resilient supply chain to operate safely, both domestically and internationally.

Since the pandemic, it has become increasingly apparent that aviation's supply chain is both complex and fragile, with several risk areas evidencing themselves as potential vulnerabilities, including workforce readiness and durability, access to critical resources, global interoperability, a supportive regulatory and policy framework, and trade stability.[7]

For example, while the Boeing Company directly employs about 150,000 workers in the U.S., they also purchase services and parts from 11,000 U.S, based companies, 3,000 of which are pure supply chain providers or businesses that provide parts directly to the production system. Eighty percent of those pure supply chain providers are small Main Street businesses. They are the multi-generational businesses that are critical to local economies. The global aerospace network is so interconnected between these companies that any geopolitical move can quickly and severely impact all facets of the network.

These types of companies are the future of American industry. The workforce is highly skilled, educated and very experienced. That workforce also supports high tech, high growth industries across America. However, the last six years have been particularly difficult for this supply chain, whether it is the impacts of the COVID pandemic or the Boeing strike last year, which shut down the production system for a few months, all these businesses were put at risk.

Accordingly, when added global economic uncertainty hits, airlines have taken actions such as deferring aircraft deliveries. Today the fragile global supply chain is weakened, and global demand has decreased.

This is an industry sector that, while resilient, is suffering from uncertainty on far too many fronts. The thousands of small businesses that are so critical in the supply chain are just now turning the corner. U.S. policy makers should be keenly aware that if the U.S. starts impacting exports and further impacting demand, or starts increasing the price of aerospace products, all of these critical American companies will be put at risk and so will the integrity of the U.S. dominated aerospace system.

As aviation stakeholders continue efforts to improve a struggling supply chain, there is little flexibility to endure disruption that will hamper a full recovery. In particular, tariffs on aircraft and parts could endanger the aviation supply chain and result in further scarcity of critical parts and components necessary for continuity of airline operations globally which may lead to the harmful consequence of bad actors providing counterfeit and unapproved parts – injecting unnecessary risk into the system. In turn, these counterfeit and unapproved parts can lead to safety and compliance issues for airlines, as the industry relies on a dependable supply of certified parts that can be easily tracked throughout their entire life-cycle from manufacture to installation, and ultimately through disposal.

To ensure continued safe and efficient operations globally, U.S. airlines need a resilient and stable global supply chain, qualities that may be compromised by introducing policies or impediments that may disrupt and/or distort the existing fragility of the global aviation supply chain. These barriers could also dismantle the delicate balance of a recovering supply chain, echoing the disruptions felt post-pandemic.

We support the Administration's efforts to reduce the overall U.S. trade imbalance but are concerned tariffs on aircraft and aircraft parts could result in a cascade of challenges and unintended consequences. In the course of your investigation, we encourage BIS to prioritize the strength, security and integrity of the supply chain to preserve the highest standards of aviation safety and the robust ecosystem that supports it.

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[7] Aerospace Supply Chain Resiliency Task Force Report to Congress. (2024, November 4).

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Unintended Consequences of Economic Disruption

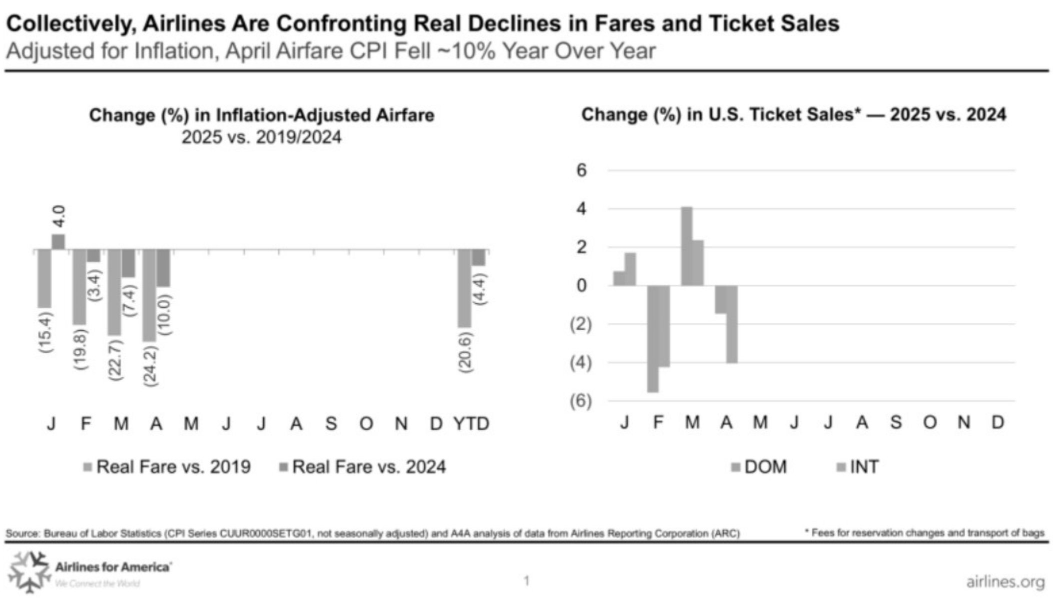
The tremendous global footprint and reach of U.S. commercial aviation contributes 5 percent U.S. GDP and supports 10 million U.S. jobs. In 2024 alone, that 5 percent of U.S. GDP equated to approximately $1.46 trillion in economic benefit to the U.S economy. Many of the jobs supported by the U.S. industry provide high-paying wages to skilled workers in a high-tech environment.

Supporting the safest, most effective form of transportation necessitates a complex spider web of worldwide suppliers for goods and services. Aerospace activities are a key driver of nearly every other industry in the United States and worldwide.[8]

Introducing tariffs on commercial aviation threatens economic stability. If tariffs are imposed, manufacturers will face higher expenses for obtaining essential parts. Those increased costs will be passed down to airlines and, ultimately, to the traveling and shipping public, potentially raising airfares, shipping rates and operating expenses.

The interconnected and multifaceted downstream effects of tariffs on aircraft and aircraft parts could lead to cost structures and operational dynamics that drive higher airfares, delays in fleet upgrades and route expansions along with disrupted maintenance schedules. These rising expenses accompanied with any softening of demand for air travel and air cargo due to economic uncertainty and reduced global trade, would be a significantly impactful combination for U.S. airlines and the 5 percent of GDP they drive.

Over the past few months, a variety of economic factors, including the prospect of tariffs, have resulted in U.S. airlines' decline in pricing power (as confirmed by U.S. CPI data for airfares). They have also faced slumping sales for future travel.

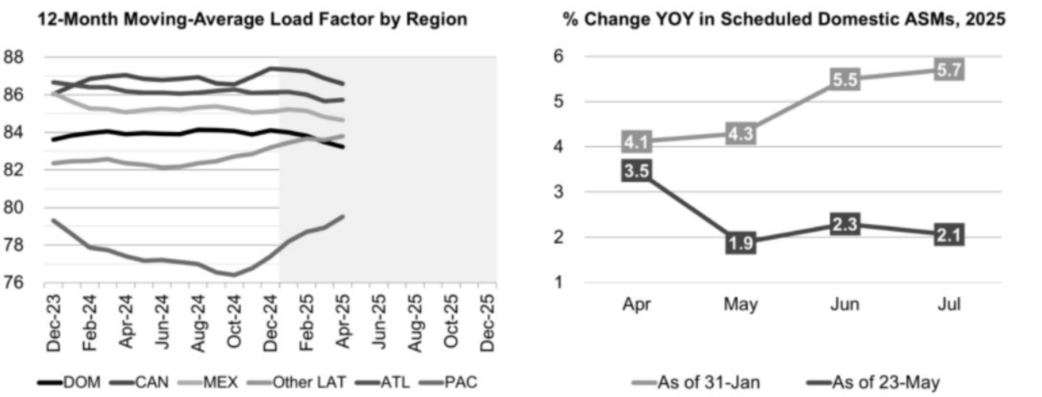


In addition to softening fares and slumping sales, airlines have experienced declining load factors (fullness of flights relative to operated seating capacity) on domestic and transborder flights. In turn, they have sharply curtailed capacity plans for the coming months. As indicated in the right-side chart below, at

[8] Ibid footnote 6.

the end of January, for example, U.S. airlines had plans to grow the domestic market by 5.7% in July 2025 versus July 2024. As of this past weekend, planned growth for July had been slashed to just 2.1%.

In Addition to Falling Fares and Slowing Sales, Load Factors in Key Regions Have Subsided
Accordingly, Published Schedules Show Domestic Capacity Growth Retrenching



Sources: A4A member passenger airlines (Alaska/Hawaiian, American, Delta, JetBlue, Southwest, United) and branded code share partners Cirium published schedules

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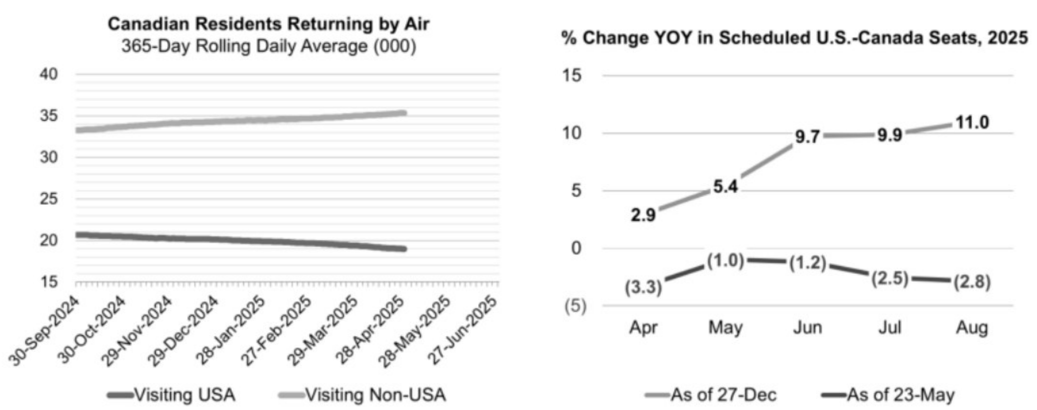
More dramatic schedule cuts have taken place between the U.S. and Canada, where inbound visitor air travel fell 14% in March and 20% in April. Using July again as a benchmark, airlines went from 9.9% planned growth of seats in the market to a 2.5% year-over-year reduction, with an even larger reversal planned for August (from +11% to -2.8%).

In Response to Falling Demand, Airlines Have Significantly Pared U.S.-Canada Air Service
Supply of Scheduled Seats Now Showing YOY *Declines* in April-August



Sources: Statistics Canada (https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/start) and Cirium published schedules for all airlines offering scheduled service from the United States to Canada

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In light of federal policy volatility and a highly uncertain economic environment, almost all U.S. airlines—like many other companies—withdrew full-year revenue and earnings guidance. As J.P. Morgan observed on April 24 (see "AAL/ALK/LUV Earnings Takeaways: Guides Pulled As Leisure Demand Wanes"), "Low-end domestic demand is under significant pressure." United Airlines, the only U.S. airline to maintain full-year guidance, opted to provide two earnings scenarios, one based a “stable” scenario and the other on a “recession” scenario.

As noted in Quartz on May 7, the cargo business and manufacturing have been impacted as well, noting that “Ford, Mattel, UPS, and more companies pulling their earnings guidance because of tariff uncertainty; Southwest Airlines, Steve Madden, Cummins, and other corporate giants say they can't give investors profit forecasts during the trade war.”[9] The authors observed: “Uncertainty over tariffs, supply chain instability, and other broader macroeconomic headwinds are pushing a growing number of major companies to pull their 2025 earnings guidance. From automakers to airlines and consumer giants, firms are increasingly opting to sit out of the forecasting game, citing economic uncertainty that, for some, is getting too thick to navigate.”

U.S. airlines have also adjusted their fleet plans and workforce in response to the current economic environment so as to optimize their resources and manage costs. For example, United Airlines revealed plans to reduce capacity starting in the September quarter and accelerate the retirement of 21 aircraft. Delta Air Lines as well indicated their intention to reduce their growth plans for this year and manage costs by expediting the retirement of older Boeing and Airbus aircraft and slowing the cadence of new aircraft deliveries. This also has an impact on their employees and supplier base as they will subsequently adjust to align with slower growth – Delta also revealed that they expect their workforce to be below prior year levels through normal and “natural” attrition. JetBlue has elected to defer the majority of its deliveries to the next decade, pushing out $3 billion worth of capital expenditures. American Airlines anticipates their full-time employee ranks to stay on par with 2024 levels and noted that they have options to adjust temper their capacity profile as conditions warrant by retiring older aircraft, returning leased aircraft, and deferring aircraft deliveries.

In the course of your investigation, we encourage BIS to prioritize the detrimental impacts tariffs would have on the broader travel, tourism and shipping economy and the harmful impacts of higher costs, higher airfares and reduced demand for commercial aviation services. By degrading the strength and usage of the aviation system, tariffs will dilute the strength of the U.S. economy.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Airlines support President Trump’s goal of reducing the U.S. trade deficit. We believe the best path forward is to build on the proven success of a $104 billion commercial aerospace trade surplus. Injecting higher costs into the commercial aviation sector will weaken our economic and national security and have a material and debilitating impact on the domestic commercial aviation industry’s ability to grow, compete, innovate and invest.

Most impactful is the potential for thrusting an unnecessary component of safety risk into the U.S. aviation system. Given the broader aviation safety and air traffic control (ATC) challenges facing our nation, disruptive and harmful trade policies would only exacerbate the stresses that exist in the system today to the detriment of the U.S. economy, and the traveling and shipping public. We applaud the Trump Administration and Secretary Duffy to continue to work on their plan to overhaul the ATC system and obtain the necessary funding from Congress. This overhaul could be the single most important project the Administration undertakes to improve U.S. global competitiveness, strengthen safety and provide greater capacity and choice for the traveling and shipping public. Now is not a time to create volatility in a market that touches so many Americans in so many ways.

Please contact Sharon Pinkerton (spinkerton@airlines.org) with any follow-up requests.

[9] https://qz.com/8-companies-pull-earnings-guidance-1851779320

From: Matesic, Hannah (OST)
Sent: Thu, 6 Feb 2025 23:24:19 +0000
To: tucker_knott@budd.senate.gov
Subject: I40 Site Visit with Secretary Duffy

Hi Tucker – Nice to meet you via way of email. My understanding is Senator Budd will be traveling with Secretary Duffy next Monday to focus on DOTs response to the hurricane damage on I40. Wanted to make myself helpful if I can provide any information or answer any questions you all might have.

Thanks!
Hannah

Hannah Matesic
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Congressional Affairs
U.S. Department of Transportation

From: Pinkerton, Sharon
Sent: Mon, 21 Apr 2025 22:02:33 +0000
To: Smith, Loren (OST)
Cc: Baraban, Cindy (OST)
Subject: 2027 Summer Season Slot Relief Request
Attachments: RequestforWaiverExtensionThroughSummer2027Season.pdf

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Department of Transportation (DOT). Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Loren – Hope all is well. I mentioned this issue to you when we met last. As we say in this letter, it's not great that we have to request less flying in order to maintain our operational reliability, but it's in the best interest of our customers and everyone else!

Please let me know if I can answer any questions. Copying Cindy as she is also familiar with these issues. Best, Sharon

Sharon L. Pinkerton
SVP Legislative & Regulatory Policy
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From: Pinkerton, Sharon
Sent: Monday, April 21, 2025 5:59 PM
To: Tim Arel (timothy.arel@faa.gov) <timothy.arel@faa.gov>
Subject: 2027 Summer Season Slot Relief Request

Tim –

As discussed, here is request for an extension of the current slot waiver, based on the view that staffing is still not adequate to provide operational reliability.

Let me know if there's anything we can do to move this forward. Also, our guys noted some concern / need for enhanced operations during the World Cup events.

Sharon

Sharon L. Pinkerton
SVP Legislative & Regulatory Policy
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April 21, 2025

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Mr. Tim Arel
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Mr. Liam McKenna
Acting Deputy Administrator
Chief Counsel
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue, SW
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A4A member carriers request an extension of the current relief through the end of the Summer 2027 season and for additional relief to protect the traveling public from operational disruptions.

On behalf of our member carriers[1], Airlines for America (A4A) respectfully requests a two-year extension of the limited, conditional waiver of the minimum usage requirement that applies to Operating Authorizations or "slots" at John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK), New York LaGuardia Airport (LGA), and Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport (DCA) and for an extension of the limited policy for prioritizing returned operations at Newark Liberty International Airport (EWR) for purposes of establishing a carrier's operational baseline in the next corresponding season, (collectively, the "slot waiver" or "relief") due to post-pandemic effects on air traffic controller (ATC) staffing at the New York Terminal Radar Approach Control (TRACON) facility (N90), the New York Air Route Traffic Control Center (ARTCC)(ZNY), and related New York City area airspace (NYC Airspace) staffing shortages.

We strongly support President Trump and Secretary Duffy's focus on revitalizing our ATC system, which is the most critical step the government can take to improve air travel. We commend Secretary Duffy for taking swift action to address the ATC staffing shortage through several initiatives including a "supercharge" of hiring, a 30% increase in pay for controllers who attend the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Academy for training, reducing the current 8-step hiring process to shave more than four months off and developing incentives for controllers eligible to retire to stay on the job. As the Secretary has noted, this shortage has been an issue for more than a decade. Accordingly, it will take time to resolve given the length of time it takes to ensure the necessary qualifications and training for air traffic controllers.

We also appreciate the steps taken by the FAA following our constructive collaboration. The importance of the NYC Airspace cannot be overstated, both in terms of its economic impact and its impact on the entire National Airspace System (NAS). The FAA reports that approximately 75% of all delays in the National Airspace System occur because of delays in the NYC Airspace. Delays and cancellations in the

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[1] Airlines for America (A4A) members are Alaska Air Group, Inc.; American Airlines Group, Inc.; Atlas Air Worldwide Holdings, Inc.; Delta Air Lines, Inc.; FedEx Corp.; Hawaiian Airlines; JetBlue Airways Corp.; Southwest Airlines Co.; United Airlines Holdings, Inc.; and United Parcel Service Co. Air Canada is an associate member.

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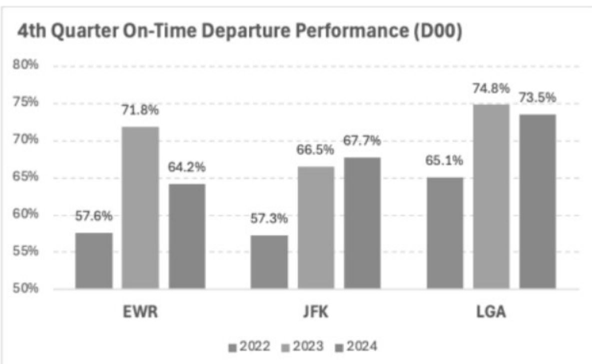
NYC Airspace ripple across the entire NAS so it is critical to ensure this part of the system is healthy. In 2019, the FAA estimated that the annual cost of delays to the U.S. economy and passengers was $33 billion, reinforcing the need to address these issues.

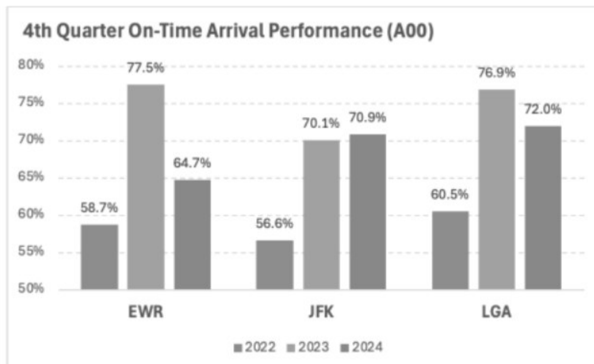
The FAA's current slot waiver permitted flexible and strategic planning by airlines and resulted in a noticeably better travel experience for consumers. We believe that a variety of circumstances (as outlined below) necessitate an extension of this relief through the end of the Summer 2027 season (October 30, 2027).

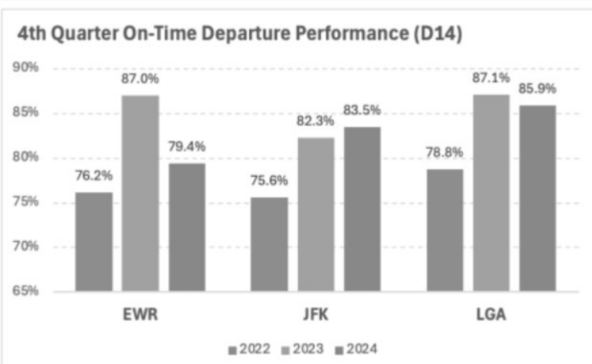
The FAA's current slot waiver successfully created a better travel experience for consumers.

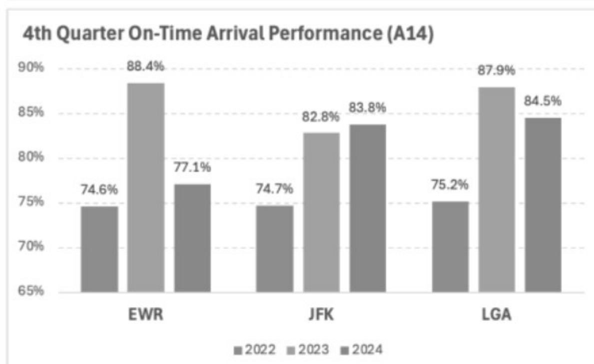
Operational reliability has materially improved since the slot waiver took effect in the fall of 2023.

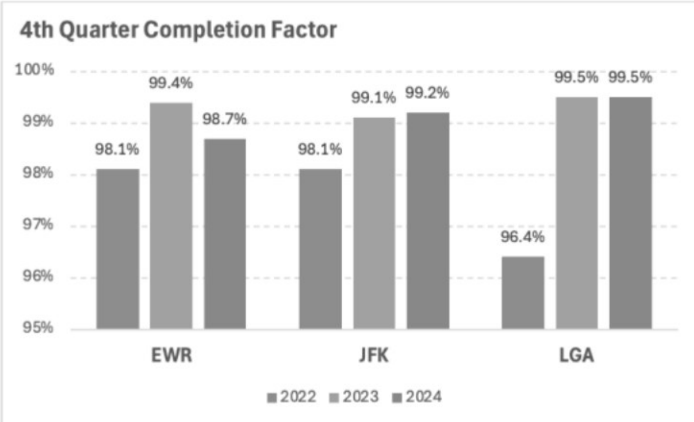
As depicted in the charts below, consumers have benefitted from a more reliable operation at the three major New York City airports (EWR, JFK, LGA) in both the 4th quarters of 2024 and 2023 when compared to the pre-waiver 4th quarter 2022 period, as measured by on-time departure and arrival performance and scheduled flight completion factors. Airlines made meaningful and challenging decisions to cut their schedules during congested peak times which contributed to better operational reliability for the flying public.











Source: Anuvu

Not only has operational reliability improved, but passengers also benefited from A4A carriers flying larger aircraft to the three New York City airports to accommodate rising demand and offset the impact of their voluntary flight reductions. The average scheduled aircraft size flown by A4A carriers in the first half of 2025 is 139 seats, a 1.5% increase over the prior year, a 6% increase from the first half of 2022 and an 11% increase from the first half of 2019. This is not only good for customers but also better for the environment as larger planes produce less emissions per passenger.

The underlying conditions creating the need for a waiver still exist as staffing shortages persist.

Under the leadership of Secretary Duffy and the Trump Administration, significant strides have already been made to address controller staffing shortages. The Administration's efforts to expand the Collegiate Training Initiative (CTI) program will augment the training at the FAA's Academy to facilitate training beyond the current capacity of 1,800 controllers. These important hiring and training initiatives are exactly what is needed to help close the gap of an almost 3,000 certified professional controller (CPC) shortage. However, given that these important programs are still in the process of being operationalized, it will take far more time to hire and train controllers for the impacted NYC Airspace.

Regarding the specific ATC staffing challenges impacting the NYC Airspace, the FAA's own staffing data through March 2025 illustrates that current controller levels at N90 and ZNY fall well short of the FAA's goal for facilities to be at least 85% staffed from target levels. While the FAA made some progress in 2024, we anticipate an ongoing challenge to adequately staff controller positions that manage NYC Airspace through the end of the Summer 2027 season based on FAA's trending staffing data.

The FAA facility staffing data shows the following:

- FAA lost 23 CPCs at N90 since the end of 2023 (March 2025 versus Dec. 2023), and they are still short 118 CPCs below the agency's defined target. In 2022 and 2023, FAA averaged seven new CPCs per year at N90 – at this run rate, it will take roughly seventeen more years for FAA to reach its target level.
- FAA lost two CPCs at ZNY since the end of 2023 (March 2025 versus Dec. 2023) and is still short 97 CPCs today below the agency's defined target – ZNY staffing levels have steadily declined for years and will require a complete change in direction if FAA is to reach its staffing goals.
- When looking at N90 and ZNY combined, the FAA currently has 307 CPCs having lost 25 CPCs since the end of 2023 – the current CPC shortfall at N90 and ZNY is 215: at a run rate of 13 new CPCs per annum, it will take an additional 16.5 years to close this gap.

- Assuming it takes three to four years on average to train a new CPC at these two facilities, it will take 645 to 860 total training years for FAA to add 215 CPCs and reach its targeted staff levels at N90 and ZNY.

Certified Professional Controller (CPC) Staffing Levels at N90 and ZNY

	Dec 2023	Dec 2024	Mar 2025
N90	226	226	226
ZNY	296	296	296
CPC Target	522	522	522
N90	131	108	108
ZNY	201	199	199
Current Number of CPCs Onboard	**332**	**307**	**307**
N90	58%	48%	48%
ZNY	68%	67%	67%
Current % CPC to Target	**64%**	**59%**	**59%**

The current and foreseeable staffing levels are neither adequate to give consumers the travel experience they deserve, nor are they able to maximize the efficiency of the NYC Airspace. While we expect the CTI initiative, the request for increased funding for the FAA Academy and increased hiring to help improve this outlook long term, we believe inadequate staffing will remain an immediate critical impediment to the efficient management of the NYC Airspace, with significant adverse effects on the NAS, through the end of the Summer 2027 season.

We applaud the FAA's initiative to move ATC oversight of Newark airspace to the Philadelphia TRACON (PHL). Given the enormous undertaking with multi-faceted challenges, it will take years before staffing levels are stable, further underscoring the need for slot relief.

In previous orders, the FAA noted that limited N90 staffing would likely cause operational disruption if carriers did not reduce their operations in the NYC Airspace. The FAA also noted that this staffing will likely remain an issue for some time. The controllers who moved from N90 to PHL are committed to a two-year tour of duty, indicating FAA's awareness that this transition will take time. A4A and our carriers have been impressed by and commend the FAA's management of this complex move and recognize the move is a long-term solution to a long-term problem. The NYC Airspace is the most complex airspace in the world and, as we anticipated, the FAA encountered both human factors challenges and technology outages that have exacerbated staffing shortages. As of today, the FAA has not yet met their CPC staffing target, and while training appears to be making progress, no trainees have been fully certified to date. In addition, some of the current CPCs will be eligible to retire, creating additional staffing pressure. We also understand that 17 of the controllers who were transferred from N90 will have the option of returning to N90 in August 2026. Combined, these issues are expected to and warrant a multi-season extension of the slot relief until the end of the Summer 2027 season.

FAA should restore limited retroactive relief and prevent backfill.

In addition to extension of the current relief, the FAA should restore carriers' ability to request retroactive relief if the impacts of controller staffing shortages are even more severe than anticipated and/or the impacts of severe weather are greater than anticipated. This relief is equitable for airlines that have small slot portfolios who may only have one flight in a particular hour. These airlines, including many international carriers, may not be in a position to proactively return slots due to their limited capacity but are still impacted by the severe ATC challenges outlined in this letter. These carriers do not heavily utilize N90 airspace and should be provided with relief in a manner that maintains competition for consumers.

We appreciate the FAA's continued commitment to support the efficacy of the wavier by ensuring that returned slots and movements cannot be utilized by other airlines to backfill or augment their schedules.

Time is needed to give carriers stability and the ability to plan.

As you know, airlines plan and publish their schedules nine to twelve months in advance. The sooner FAA acts on this request, the more certainty carriers will be able to provide to customers regarding schedules. Also, we are required by Collective Bargaining Agreements to provide ample notice to our crews regarding scheduling. We are already less than a month before the IATA schedule submission deadline for the Winter 2025/26 season with complete uncertainty as to the level of service that can be operated. We urgently need clarity as soon as possible so our carriers can plan accordingly. This will benefit both our customers and our crews whose schedules are finalized months in advance. Based on the information available today, it is clear that the N90 and ZNY staffing issues will require at least another two years for FAA to be sufficiently staffed in order to maintain operational reliability for consumers.

Conclusion

Please know that carriers do not enjoy asking for this extension of reduced flying. It is in our interest and the consumers' interest to maintain or increase our levels of flying. For this reason, we are deeply appreciative and supportive of Secretary Duffy's initiatives to build a world-class ATC system that is fully staffed with qualified and well-trained controllers. Airlines have increased staffing and are flying larger aircraft to accommodate passenger demand. While schedule reductions are a lost opportunity to meet customer demand, the only thing worse for passengers would be for carriers to fly full schedules when it is clear the NAS cannot accommodate that demand. The resulting operational volatility would only serve to disrupt airline employees and the travelling public.

We are respectfully requesting two years of relief because ATC staffing shortages and the continuing work to ensure the move of N90 airspace is successful are not within the airlines' control as outlined above. This *tailored and temporary* relief will provide the needed ability for airlines to plan reliable schedules for our passengers and crew, in addition to giving the FAA the time needed to implement the necessary staffing solutions.

Stability and certainty are critical in light of the numerous challenges facing the entire aviation industry. Accordingly, we respectfully request that the FAA grant the requested relief as soon as practicable, preferably by May 26, 2025, so that carriers can make the complex aircraft and crew scheduling decisions necessary to serve the flying public. Now is not the time to introduce additional operational volatility into the system.

We welcome the opportunity to further discuss this request and are committed to collaborating with DOT and the FAA on how best to serve the traveling public considering the acute challenges in managing the NYC Airspace.

Sincerely,

Sharon H. Pinkerton

Sharon Pinkerton
Senior Vice President,
Legislative and Regulatory Policy

Patricia Vercelli
Senior Vice President,
Chief Legal Officer

From: Arata, Brian
Sent: Thu, 13 Mar 2025 14:53:39 +0000
To: Matesic, Hannah (OST)
Subject: 25-26 MPDG for the North Central Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission
Attachments: North Central DOT MPDG Support Letter 5-1-24.pdf

Hi Hannah,

Hope all is well! I'm reaching out today to inquire about the status of a DOT award for the North Central Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission. They received a notice a $8.552 million award through the 2025-2026 Multimodal Discretionary Grants Program for various local bridge replacements and rehabilitations but have yet to receive the funds.

Congressman Thompson has been very supportive of this project (previous LOS attached) and would appreciate an update on when North Central can expect to receive these funds. Appreciate any information you can share.

Thanks!
Brian

--
Brian M. Arata
Legislative Director
Office of Congressman Glenn "GT" Thompson (PA-15)
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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

May 1, 2024

Mr. Pete Buttigieg, Secretary
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, S.E.
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Buttigieg:

I am writing to give my full support for the U.S. Department of Transportation's Fiscal Year 25-26 Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant application submitted by the North Central Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission (North Central). North Central will use this funding to rehabilitate and replace six locally owned bridges in Cameron, Clearfield, Elk, Jefferson, McKean, and Potter Counties. This project will address longstanding infrastructure challenges and drive economic growth, job creation, and community well-being in our region.

North Central is the Rural Transportation Organization for this six-county region and has worked closely with PennDOT District 2-0, PennDOT District 10-0, and the local municipalities to collaborate on this ambitious project. These rural bridges are in poor condition and need to be restored to provide safe access to the region. The six bridges include:

- Steam Mill Road Bridge, Lumber Township, Cameron County
- T-748 Mosquito Creek Bridge, Karthaus Township, Clearfield County
- Caledonia Pike Bridge, Jay Township, Elk County
- Kramer Road Bridge, McCalmont Township, Jefferson County
- Arnold Avenue Bridge, Port Allegany, McKean County
- Big Moore's Run Bridge, Homer Township, Potter County

With all six counties nestled in the heart of the PA Wilds, safe access to our state forests and industrial lands is crucial to driving economic growth and prosperity throughout the region by enhancing business development, job creation, and attracting visitors to the region for outdoor recreation and tourism. Equally crucial is the project's role in providing safe access to residential areas across the region. The establishment of secure transportation to homes, coupled with reliable access to emergency services, is indispensable for fostering a flourishing community and addressing the challenges associated with outmigration from a region.

Thank you for your consideration of this important application. I respectfully request that you keep my office informed of the status of this grant application.

Sincerely,

Glenn Thompson

Glenn "GT" Thompson
Member of Congress

GT/av