



GREATER ORLANDO AVIATION AUTHORITY

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Orlando International Airport  
One Jeff Fuqua Boulevard  
Orlando, Florida 32827-4399

May 21, 2015

The Honorable John F. Kerry  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20520

The Honorable Anthony Foxx  
Secretary of Transportation  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

The Honorable Penny S. Pritzker  
Secretary of Commerce  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20230

**RE: REQUEST FOR COMMENTS ON PRESERVING OPEN SKIES AND ENSURING COMPETITIVE CHOICE  
FOR CONSUMERS DOCKET NO. DOS-2015-0016 - DOCKET NO. DOT-OST-2015-0082 - DOCKET  
NO.  
DOC-2015-0001**

Dear Secretary Kerry, Secretary Foxx and Secretary Pritzker:

The Greater Orlando Aviation Authority ("GOAA") appreciates the opportunity to comment on the importance of the United States' longstanding Open Skies policy to the customers we serve and Central Florida's economy. We commend the Obama Administration for seeking the views of the broader stakeholder community. GOAA believes it is imperative the decision in this matter is guided by the national economic interest, not the narrow self-interest of a few companies.

Tourism is critical to Central Florida generating more than \$60 billion in economic activity and supporting more than 390,000 jobs last year, representing over 1/3 of all jobs in our region. Our airports serve as an engine for this tourism-related commercial activity. In 2014, more than 4.3 million international visitors relied on Orlando International Airport as their gateway to Central Florida and, thanks to Open Skies, we are seeing year-over-year growth in international passengers.

Simply put, the ability of Orlando International Airport to attract international passengers and so benefit the Central Florida economy is inextricably linked to Open Skies. Any policy decision which limits or restricts Open Skies access to the US is unwise in our view.

Literally, Open Skies has enabled Orlando to become a global tourism and trade destination with non-stop air service links to Europe, Canada, Mexico, and Central and South America. In the absence of this free air service trade policy, Orlando International Airport would be unable to provide the access for international visitors that our local tourism attractions require to sustain the area economy, support tens

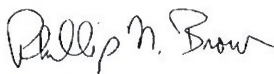
of thousands of jobs, and realize Central Florida's potential as the premier leisure destination in the world,. Rapidly expanding air service trade between Brazil and Orlando is an example of the power of Open Skies. According to the US National Travel Tourism Office (NTTO), visitors from Brazil to Orlando have soared from 74,000 in 2004 to 768,000 in 2013 and accelerated exponentially after the US Open Skies with Brazil was negotiated. Earlier this week, another new Brazilian flight was announced that will provide the first-ever non-stop service to Belo Horizonte.

GOAA and Central Florida are direct and substantial stakeholders in this matter. In their April 17 letter to you, the CEOs of Delta Air Lines, United Airlines and American Airlines demanded that Emirates Airline's new Orlando-Dubai non-stop flight, scheduled to start on September 1, be prohibited. Specifically, for their narrow self-interest, they demanded a freeze on all new flights clearly authorized by the US-UAE and US-Qatar Open Skies agreements retroactive to January 28, 2015. This is nothing short of an invitation for President Obama's Administration to breach international agreements, send a signal to the world that the US does not keep its word when it agrees to open its air service market on a reciprocal basis, and put Delta, United and American's self-interest ahead of the best interest of Central Florida that will receive more than \$100 million in annual economic benefits from Orlando's first ever non-stop air service link to the Middle East. That is an invitation the Administration should emphatically decline.

GOAA and the Central Florida economy, including tens of thousands of tourism-related jobs that depend on a free and unimpeded flow of international visitors through Orlando International, urge you to be guided by the broader national interest, not the parochial interests of a few. We believe that focus will lead to the inescapable conclusion that Open Skies policy has produced and continues to produce enormous economic benefits for our country, and any attempt to limit or restrict existing Open Skies rights to protect US airlines' record-breaking profits is unwise. Neither the US economy nor our economy in Central Florida can afford the Open Skies policy departure that is being urged in this matter. The Orlando area certainly cannot afford to lose the more than \$100 million in new annual economic activity Emirates' new Orlando-Dubai non-stop flight will generate, and the nearly 1,500 jobs it will support.

Thank you for considering our views in this extremely important matter.

Sincerely,



Phillip N. Brown, AAE  
Executive Director



Frank Kruppenbacher  
Chairman