



CITY OF HOUSTON

Annise D. Parker

Mayor



Mario C. Diaz
Director of Aviation

George Bush Intercontinental ~ William P. Hobby ~ Ellington Airport

July 26, 2011

Members of the Houston Delegation
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Reference: FAA Reauthorization; Please Support the Clean Extension Bill, the Aviation Jobs and Safety Act of 2011

Dear Colleagues:

As you know, we are at a critical juncture insofar as FAA Reauthorization is concerned. We in Houston fully understand that as a nation we are facing some very difficult decisions and that the spectrum of views on the best way to handle our economic crisis is broad. There is, however, at least one thing on which we should be able to agree, namely that the federal agencies essential to the day-to-day functioning of our infrastructure must be funded. The current partial shutdown of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) cannot be allowed to continue; an ongoing shutdown is already having an adverse economic impact and has the potential to cause serious long-term economic damage. On behalf of the Houston Airport System and the entire Houston region, I urge you to support the clean extension bill just introduced by Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Ranking Member Rahall and Aviation Subcommittee Ranking Member Costello (the Aviation Jobs and Safety Act of 2011), and to work with the leadership to return the FAA to full operations immediately.

As you are aware, the long term reauthorization of the FAA has become mired in issues that have delayed its passage for too long, and we appreciate that the House has worked hard to engage the Senate in passing a long term bill. But the immediate problem, and the cause of the FAA shutdown, lies in the absence of a clean extension bill emanating from the House; the only realistic way to resolve this and to get the FAA up and running again immediately is passage by the House of a clean extension, preferably through the end of the fiscal year, that would return the FAA to full functionality and provide time to resolve the few remaining outstanding issues in the long term bill. The Aviation Jobs and Safety Act of 2011 bill would achieve that.

As a City, as a region, and as a nation we cannot afford to have the FAA shut down, even partially. Our air transportation system is the lifeblood of our communities and of the national and global economies. In Houston, our airports are responsible for nearly 231,000 jobs and have an economic impact on our region of \$27 billion. Even a shutdown of a few days is

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costing us and the federal government resources that should be deployed towards the economic recovery, and already we are faced with the shutdown of essential capital improvement projects, increases in project costs, and possible furloughs. The FAA has already suspended construction of the new Houston TRACON facilities – a major project secured and funded by the efforts of the Houston delegation – facilities that are key to effective airspace management in the Houston region and far beyond.

Action on a clean extension bill is truly urgent, and we earnestly seek your support in ensuring its prompt passage. We ask for your vote on the bill and request that you contact Chairman Mica and the House leadership to ensure that the clean bill is brought to the floor for a vote at the earliest possible date.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of these requests and for your ongoing support of our airport system. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,



Mario C. Diaz

MCD/la

cc: Mayor Annise D. Parker
Sec. Ray LaHood
FAA Administrator Randy Babbitt

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