



PRESIDENT'S DEPARTMENT

# AIR LINE PILOTS ASSOCIATION, INTERNATIONAL

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February 19, 2013

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of 51,000 professional airline pilots represented by the Air Line Pilots Association, International (ALPA), I am writing to ask that you consider the impact on U.S. workers when preparing your Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 budget request for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Specifically, we ask that you not include any authority for DHS to accept third party reimbursement for foreign Customs and Border Protection (CBP) preclearance facilities.

Nearly 4,500 ALPA members have written to you over the past few months to express their concerns about ongoing negotiations between the United States and the United Arab Emirates to create a new CBP preclearance facility at Abu Dhabi International airport. The creation of this facility jeopardizes U.S. pilot jobs and breaks with past precedent for establishing CBP preclearance locations.

Currently, the United States operates 15 CBP preclearance locations in Canada, Ireland, and the Caribbean. Each of these airports is served by at least one U.S. airline, and at least 40 percent of that traffic to the United States is flown by U.S. pilots. These facilities offer a convenience and benefit to U.S. travelers and the U.S. airline industry and its employees.

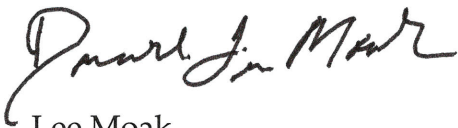
By contrast, no U.S. airline flies to Abu Dhabi. Establishing a preclearance site at that state-owned airport will unduly benefit one of our biggest foreign competitors because it allows Etihad, the national airline of the UAE, to offer a convenience to its customers that U.S. airlines, who are competing for passengers flying to the United States from the region, do not have. This arrangement will undercut U.S. carriers' ability to compete in the global marketplace.

We are concerned that DHS has sought to finance this facility by seeking reimbursement from the UAE government. DHS' proposal to create preclearance facilities for governments that will simply pay for them, fails to take into account the impact the facility will have on staffing at other CBP sites, national security, or the health of U.S. airlines. This "pay-to-play" construct creates an incentive to shift funding sources to foreign governments and allocate resources to those most willing to pay, rather than those with the greatest needs.

A new facility at Abu Dhabi will undoubtedly further strain CBP operations and staffing levels, forcing customers at U.S. airports to endure extended wait times and undermine efforts to increase tourism. Passengers of foreign flag carriers in the UAE should not receive preferential treatment because their government is willing to fund DHS while U.S. carrier passengers wait in understaffed airports.

It is ALPA's strong belief that CBP preclearance facilities should first and foremost benefit U.S. airlines and their employees, U.S. taxpayers, and the U.S. economy. Please stand with U.S. aviation employees and do not include authority for DHS to accept third-party reimbursement for the creation of CBP preclearance facilities in your FY 2014 budget request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lee Moak". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "L" and "M".

Lee Moak  
President

cc: Janet Napolitano, Secretary, Department of Homeland Security  
David V. Aguilar, Deputy Commissioner, U.S. Customs and Border Protection  
Jeffrey Zients, Acting Director, Office of Management and Budget