

FrontLines

■ ALPA Urges Congress To Support U.S. Aviation Industry; Prohibit Funding For Abu Dhabi Preclearance Facility

Capt. Lee Moak, ALPA's president, on July 10 urged Congress to support the U.S. airline industry and prohibit funding for a Customs and Border Protection (CBP) preclearance facility at the Abu Dhabi International Airport in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). In testimony to the U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee's Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade, Moak detailed the potential harm that a preclearance facility in Abu Dhabi would have on U.S. airlines and the millions of Americans employed directly or indirectly by the industry. Moak also advocated for Congress to take decisive action in leveling the playing field and strengthening the U.S. airline industry—without wasting taxpayers' money.

"It makes no sense to have an Abu Dhabi preclearance facility, as no U.S. carrier flies between Abu Dhabi and the United States," said Moak. "Nor does it make 'cents' to use U.S. taxpayers' money as financial assistance to one of the wealthiest emirates in the UAE, especially when doing so would provide a foreign airline with distinct marketing advantages and further exacerbate the disadvantages that U.S. airlines face in the international marketplace."

The hearing to investigate the effects of the Abu Dhabi preclearance facility on U.S. businesses was an important step toward promoting the

nation's airlines; however, more needs to be done in order to protect the future of the U.S. airline industry.

ALPA recommended the following:

- The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) should abandon any plans to open a preclearance facility in the UAE, or any country where U.S. airlines do not do at least a majority of the flying.
- Congress should pass strong legislation that will prevent DHS from using U.S. taxpayer money to provide a benefit to non-U.S. airlines, thereby hurting U.S. airlines and their employees. It should also prohibit DHS from accepting independent funding of preclearance facilities from any third parties, including cities, countries, and carriers.
- The United States should prioritize adequate resources to fully and appropriately staff domestic customs and immigration operations to reduce passenger wait times at all international airports to a reasonable maximum. DHS should improve its services and staffing at U.S. airports instead of spreading its resources to foreign countries not served by any U.S. airline.
- The United States should adopt a formal transportation policy that supports its airline industry and places it in a position to compete with every airline in the world. This policy would need to start with a complete review and reform of the tax and fee structure applied to U.S. airlines.

The U.S. airline industry and its employees operate in a hypercompetitive global marketplace. Foreign airlines



CHRIS WEINER

Capt. Moak, right, testifies at a House hearing on the Abu Dhabi preclearance facility. On his right is Nicholas E. Calio, president and chief executive officer of Airlines for America.

are often state-owned or heavily state-sponsored and operate with significant advantages such as a tax-free local environment, beneficial regulatory policy, and virtually unlimited access to the U.S. market. In contrast, the U.S. has no formal transportation policy in place that supports aviation, and it is the most heavily taxed of all industries in America with 17 unique taxes and fees.

"U.S. airlines and their employees are driven to compete and prevail against our foreign competitors," said Moak. "But our industry cannot prevail—or even keep pace—while hindered by actions from our own government that hurt our ability to compete in the international marketplace. The U.S. government needs to change course and level the playing field. Putting a permanent halt to the Abu Dhabi preclearance facility is a critical step in that direction."

For more information and to make your voice heard, visit www.alpa.org/drawthelinehere.

■ ALPA Calls for Thorough Investigation of Asiana Flight 214 Accident; Warns Against Making Conclusions Based on Partial Data

"First and foremost, our thoughts are with those who were involved in the accident," ALPA said in a statement regarding the crash landing

of Asiana Flight 214 in San Francisco on July 6. "From the crew to the passengers to the families and first responders, we hope they can gain some comfort during this

difficult time.

"ALPA is stunned by the amount of detailed operational data from onboard recorders released by the NTSB this soon into the investigation. The amount of data released publicly during the field portion of the accident investigation is unprecedented.



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"It is imperative that safety investigators refrain from prematurely releasing the information from onboard recording devices. We have seen in the past that publicizing the data before all of it can be collected and analyzed leads to erroneous conclusions that can actually interfere with the investigative process.

"The release of individual data points from the flight data recorder and the cockpit voice recorder—without the context of the entire body of factual investigative data—represents a potential detriment to flight safety. It encourages wild speculation, as we have already seen in the news media, about causes of the accident before all the facts are known, before investigators have the ability to determine why the events

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occurred, and in this case before the flight crew had even been interviewed.

"This premature release of partial data is often taken out of context and creates the impression that the NTSB has already determined probable cause even before the investigation has started. Since each factor of flight, landing, airport environment, and crew are part of safe air travel, we need to ensure that reckless release of information is not sensationalized by the news media for the purpose of a few headlines.

"ALPA has long supported an objective accident investigation process that is based on the fundamental principle of obtaining all the facts to perform accurate analysis in the context of all factors that may have led to an accident. We stand ready to assist the NTSB or any state investigative agency in obtaining those facts and ensuring that an appropriate operational context is maintained.

"ALPA urges the NTSB to make sure that the objective investigative process continues by gathering all the facts and relevant information before leading the public to believe that a cause has been determined."

■ Delta Pilots Host Summer Unity-Building Events

The Delta Pilot Network, a committee of the Delta pilots' Master Executive Council (MEC), has been busy this summer hosting pilot unity-building (PUB) events. These PUB events are a direct



More than 200 Delta pilots and their families attend a unity-building cookout in Peachtree City, Ga., in June.

response to the pilots' desire for more frequent face-to-face communication with their negotiators, reps, committee chairs, and MEC officers.

Each event is organized by local pilots, with locations selected to make attending as convenient as possible. Although there is no set agenda, the informal setting has been successful in providing an opportunity for line pilots to find out what's going on throughout their industry, airline, and union.

More than 200 attended the family-friendly airport cookout that took place in Peachtree City, Ga., on June 19. Entertainment was provided for the kids, and aircraft were on display for the pilots. With ongoing PUB events at training and layover hotels, coupled with larger domicile events in DTW, MSP, SAN, and SLC, Delta pilots now have more opportunities than ever to participate in their union.

■ Jazz MEC Uses New Method to Reach Out To Members

On June 27, the Jazz Master Executive Council (MEC) held an all-day online question-and-answer session for pilots

to log in to the Jazz MEC site and get answers directly from pilot leaders. The MEC opened the forum at 9 a.m., and within minutes, questions started being posted on the site. Over the next eight hours, the MEC responded to every question submitted, often addressing rumors and clarifying policy. The live blog was hosted on the site's front page and will remain available on the website so that pilots can continue to access the information. This is all part of an evolving communications plan to better serve the pilot group, incorporating a number of new technologies and social media to reach out to the more than 1,300 Jazz pilots.

"This is the first time we've held something like this, and, although we had a few technical issues early on, we enjoyed being able to reach our pilot group in a different way," said Capt. Claude Buraglia, the pilots' MEC chairman. "We are a very geographically diverse group, and we are always looking for innovative methods to reach more pilots and provide our members greater access to the MEC. Given the number of questions we were able to

answer directly, we consider this a success, but we are looking forward to feedback from the pilot group."

■ Air Wisconsin MEC Kicks Off Meeting with Unity Run

On June 18, the Air Wisconsin Master Executive Council (MEC) hit the pavement at Fort Benjamin Harrison, a former U.S. Army post, in Indianapolis, Ind., for its Unity Run—an event that's becoming a tradition prior to the members convening for union business. The MEC held its first Unity Run at ALPA's 2012 Board of Directors meeting last October. The event helped to strengthen pilot unity and stimulate dialogue to address issues.

Members discussed ongoing Section 6 negotiations, grievances, retirement and insurance, and other issues.

The pilots have been negotiating for an improved contract since October 2010, and management recently filed for mediation assistance with the National Mediation Board (NMB). The MEC looks forward to working with the NMB to reach a successful conclusion to negotiations.

■ Compass Pilots Begin Mediation

Compass pilots reached another milestone in their fast-track contract negotiations when they entered talks with private mediator/arbitrator Josh Javits on June 18. Mediation was the next step in the pilot group's unique contract talks, which are using private mediation-arbitration