

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

January 24, 2008

Mr. Robert A. Sturgell
Acting Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, D.C., 20591

Dear Mr. Sturgell:

It has come to our attention that the Federal Aviation Administration may be considering plans to consolidate the engineering services at the FAA's nine regional offices and eliminate the engineering services at several of these offices.

We share your commitment to ensure the safety and efficiency of air travel throughout the United States. However, we are concerned that the FAA's consolidation plans would compromise air travel safety and reduce the efficiency of the services performed by the regional offices.

The consolidation of engineering services at the FAA's regional offices presumably would reduce or eliminate positions for experienced engineers at the regional offices in Anchorage, Burlington/Nashua, Chicago, Kansas City, New York and Los Angeles. This would compromise the safety of air travel in the regions of the United States served by these offices. Safe and efficient air travel requires engineering and support services that are accessible and convenient for the airports and air travelers that rely on them.

We are concerned that this consolidation may be a step toward the closure of several of the FAA's regional offices. The pending consolidation would be the latest of several administrative actions to reduce personnel in the regional offices. Last year, the FAA consolidated the Air Traffic Organization's administrative and technical support services. The previous year, the FAA consolidated financial accounting services at the regional offices. Consolidation of the engineering services would fit into a clear pattern that suggests plans to consolidate the FAA's nine regional offices into three offices, which would then be expected to serve all fifty states.

H.R. 2881, the FAA Reauthorization Act, as passed by the House of Representatives on September 20, includes language (Section 807) to require the Secretary of Transportation to establish a working group on FAA consolidation. This working group would review proposals to consolidate FAA facilities and services, obtain input from affected stakeholders and comments from the public, and make recommendations to Congress. The FAA would not be allowed to consolidate any of its facilities or services, including the regional offices, until Congress has had an opportunity to consider the working group's recommendations. The FAA Reauthorization Act is awaiting action in the Senate and could be signed into law this year.

In the meantime, the FAA should not move forward with plans to consolidate the regional offices without Congressional consultation and oversight. Therefore, we recommend that you suspend all plans to consolidate the FAA's engineering services and consult with Members of Congress regarding the future of the FAA's regional offices and the services performed by these offices.

We appreciate your attention to our concerns. We look forward to working with you to ensure that the FAA's regional offices are able to provide safe and efficient services to the American people.

Sincerely,



Maxine Waters



Paul Hodes



Gary L. Ackerman



Barney Frank



Adam B. Schiff



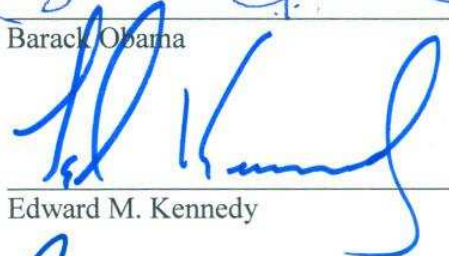
James P. McGovern



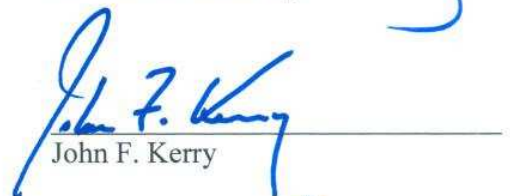
Mark Steven Kirk



Barack Obama



Edward M. Kennedy



John F. Kerry



Barbara Boxer



Janice Schakowsky



Michael A. Arcuri



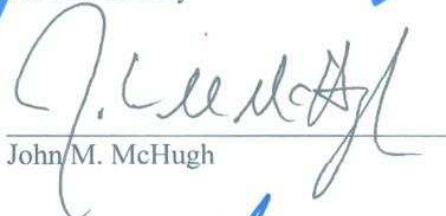
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Edward Markey


Laura Richardson


John F. Tierney


Gregory W. Meeks


John M. McHugh


Alcee Hastings


Jane Harman

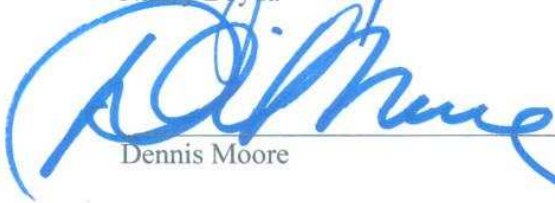

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William D. Delahunt


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Nancy Boyda


Dan Lipinski


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Congresswoman Maxine Waters

Representing the 35th District of California

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Congresswoman Waters and 34 other Members of Congress Urge FAA Not to Consolidate Regional Offices

January 24, 2008

Washington, DC - Today, Rep. Maxine Waters (D-CA) sent a letter to Mr. Robert A. Sturgell, the Acting Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), urging him to suspend all plans to consolidate the engineering services at the FAA's regional offices. The letter was signed by 4 members of the United States Senate and 31 members of the House of Representatives. The FAA has nine regional offices, including one in Los Angeles, which serve airports and air travelers nationwide. The text of the letter follows:

It has come to our attention that the Federal Aviation Administration may be considering plans to consolidate the engineering services at the FAA's nine regional offices and eliminate the engineering services at several of these offices.

We share your commitment to ensure the safety and efficiency of air travel throughout the United States. However, we are concerned that the FAA's consolidation plans would compromise air travel safety and reduce the efficiency of the services performed by the regional offices.

The consolidation of engineering services at the FAA's regional offices presumably would reduce or eliminate positions for experienced engineers at the regional offices in Anchorage, Burlington/Nashua, Chicago, Kansas City, New York and Los Angeles. This would compromise the safety of air travel in the regions of the United States served by these offices. Safe and efficient air travel requires engineering and support services that are accessible and convenient for the airports and air travelers that rely on them.

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includes language (Section 807) to require the Secretary of Transportation to establish a working group on FAA consolidation. This working group would review proposals to consolidate FAA facilities and services, obtain input from affected stakeholders and comments from the public, and make recommendations to Congress. The FAA would not be allowed to consolidate any of its facilities or services, including the regional offices, until Congress has had an opportunity to consider the working group's recommendations. The FAA Reauthorization Act is awaiting action in the Senate and could be signed into law this year.

In the meantime, the FAA should not move forward with plans to consolidate the regional offices without Congressional consultation and oversight. Therefore, we recommend that you suspend all plans to consolidate the FAA's engineering services and consult with Members of Congress regarding the future of the FAA's regional offices and the services performed by these offices.

We appreciate your attention to our concerns. We look forward to working with you to ensure that the FAA's regional offices are able to provide safe and efficient services to the American people.

Sincerely,

Maxine Waters	Barack Obama
Paul Hodes	Edward M. Kennedy
Gary L. Ackerman	John F. Kerry
Barney Frank	Barbara Boxer
Adam B. Schiff	Janice Schakowsky
James P. McGovern	Michael A. Arcuri
Mark Steven Kirk	Xavier Becerra
Edward Markey	Laura Richardson
John F. Tierney	Gregory W. Meeks
John M. McHugh	Alcee Hastings
Jane Harman	Bob Filner
William D. Delahunt	Ed Pastor
Nancy Boyda	Dan Lipinski
Dennis Moore	Michael E. Capuano
Joe Baca	Linda T. Sánchez
Grace Napolitano	John Lewis
Phil Hare	Emanuel Cleaver
Rahm Emanuel	

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Contact: Mikael Moore
202-225-2201

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February 5, 2009

Ensure the Integrity and Safety of our Air Transportation Network

Oppose Consolidation of Regional FAA Engineering Centers

Dear Colleague:

We invite you to join us in sending the attached letter to Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood urging him to postpone Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) plans to consolidate regional engineering service centers.

Under the current Air Traffic Organization's (ATO) Engineering Services Efficiency Plan, the FAA is readying to consolidate nine regional engineering and support service centers to just three offices across the country. Approximately 300 FAA engineers across the country will be forced to relocate. Unfortunately, the FAA expects 70 percent of these engineers to leave their jobs rather than relocate their families. This employment attrition rate is extremely alarming, given that ATO Engineering Services lost 17 percent of its engineering workforce from 2006 to 2007.

As the FAA works to upgrade the nearly 60 percent of Air Traffic Control Towers that are past their 30-year design life and move toward the satellite based system, NEXGEN, it cannot afford to lose the human capital and experience provided by these engineers and other service providers. We therefore encourage you to join us in requesting that these consolidation plans be postponed until Congress can create a fair and transparent review process. This will ensure that we maintain the integrity and safety of our nation's air transportation network.

To sign on to this important letter or for more information, please contact Brian Oszakiewski with Rep. Lipinski at x5-5701 or brian.oszakiewski@mail.house.gov or Andria Hoffman with Rep. Kirk at x5-4835 or andria.hoffman@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,



DANIEL LIPINSKI
Member of Congress



MARK STEVEN KIRK
Member of Congress

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February XX, 2009

The Honorable Ray H. LaHood
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary LaHood:

We write to you today to respectfully request that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) postpone its efforts to consolidate engineering and support services from nine regional offices to three service centers as part of the Air Traffic Organization's (ATO) Engineering Services Efficiency Plan (ESEP). While consolidation may be a legitimate alternative in some specific instances, it seems ESEP will continue to inhibit the FAA's long term ability to most effectively serve its customers and the flying public.

As you know, the stated goals of ESEP are to "optimize business processes to improve effectiveness of customer service" and to "increase the value of engineering services for customers." Unfortunately, the FAA only expects approximately 30 percent of "impacted engineers" to relocate under ESEP, resulting in the loss of many of the most skilled and experienced implementation engineers. Given that ATO Engineering Services lost 17 percent of its engineering workforce from 2006 to 2007, this additional anticipated loss of human capital and experience will make it increasingly difficult for the FAA to improve "customer service" and "value" for customers while maintaining quality, performance, and most importantly, safety.

The employment attrition rate for FAA engineers is especially concerning when put in perspective for the work that needs to be done. A recent DOT Inspector General investigation requested by House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Jim Oberstar (D-MN) revealed that 59 percent of the FAA's 420 Air Traffic Control Towers are past their 30-year design life. These facilities are located in all corners of the country and require engineers to survey, design, plan and implement the upgrades and replacements of the facilities. The consolidation of the planning function has already resulted in a delay to many programs and projects. Consolidation of the engineering workforce will only further delay the upgrades needed to the National Airspace System and projects that are vital to the integrity of the system.

Further, the FAA's plans to move towards a satellite based system, NEXGEN, will require experienced engineers to ensure the existing systems perform correctly and efficiently through the eventual transition. This will be a very complicated process that can only be safely accomplished with dedicated engineering professionals with direct

knowledge of the facilities in their regions. Unfortunately, consolidation in this instance will not only result in a significant loss of skilled engineers, but engineers equipped with region-specific knowledge to implement and monitor this transition.

Given the significant impact that ESEP will have on the FAA and its ability to maintain quality, performance, and safety, we urge you to refrain from making any changes to the services provided by the regional offices and to specifically stop all activity on the ESEP until Congress can create a fair and transparent review process. We encourage you to consider that President Obama has a history of opposition to the current, unvetted engineer consolidation plan, as shown in the attached January 24, 2008 letter.

Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this matter. We look forward to working with you as we aim to strengthen and enhance our nation's aviation system.

Sincerely,



DANIEL LIPINSKI
Member of Congress



MARK STEVEN KIRK
Member of Congress