

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 13, 2003

The Honorable John L. Mica
Chairman
Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Aviation
2251 Rayburn Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Mica:

We write to urge you the strongest terms possible not to include provisions in and oppose amendments to legislation reauthorizing the Federal Aviation Administration that would undermine local control and alter current operational restrictions at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport.

Back in 1986, Congress entered into a compact and agreed to cede control of National Airport to a regional authority that would have, in the words of current law, "full power and dominion over, and complete discretion in, operation and development of the Airports." In return, Virginia, the District of Columbia, and Maryland agreed to accept operational control of the airports and raise the money necessary to modernize National and Dulles airports. The Commonwealth of Virginia, the State of Maryland and the District of Columbia have upheld their part of the bargain. Congress should have abided by its part.

The perimeter rule and slot limitations at National are part of that compact and integral to the successful operation of the region's airports. As local officials who helped craft the perimeter rule intended, that rule has enabled National to flourish as a short-haul airport. At the same time, it has permitted Washington Dulles International Airport to become a premier long-haul airport and an important international gateway. Simply put, the rule plays an indispensable role in balancing air service in the Washington metropolitan region. In doing so, it assures that many smaller markets continue to have non-stop air service to the nation's capital. If the perimeter rule is relaxed, it would give carriers a strong economic incentive to substitute more profitable long-haul service to large markets at the expense of current short-haul service to smaller communities within the 1,250 mile perimeter.

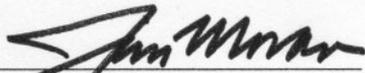
Adding more slots becomes a zero sum gain. The point is being reached where operational and safety constraints imposed by the type of runway and the number of gates, not slots, will limit the number of flights the airport is capable of handling. Smaller cities, those that can least afford it from an economic development standpoint, will see their non-stop air service

link with the nation's capital severed. Further relaxation of the perimeter rule, no matter how limited initially, will only accelerate what has already been set in motion: a reduction of essential air service to smaller communities inside the 1250 mile perimeter.

Finally, the balance that was struck between the transportation and economic needs of air travelers and the region's environmental concerns was crucial to community acceptance of the redevelopment of National, a billion dollar project now nearing completion. Adding one more slot, one more flight is more than we or our residents bargained. The local authority and the local citizens have kept their part of this bargain. Congress should keep its part.

As you move toward markup, we hope you heed our concerns and oppose any language that relaxes the slot and perimeter rules for National. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact our offices.

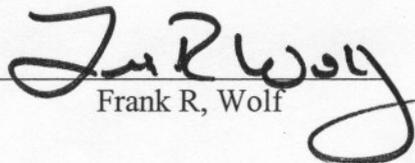
Sincerely,



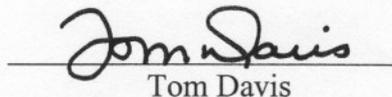
James P. Moran



Eleanor Holmes Norton



Frank R. Wolf



Tom Davis

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 13, 2003

The Honorable Peter A. DeFazio
Ranking Member
Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Aviation
2251 Rayburn Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Rep. DeFazio:

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Back in 1986, Congress entered into a compact and agreed to cede control of National Airport to a regional authority that would have, in the words of current law, "full power and dominion over, and complete discretion in, operation and development of the Airports." In return, Virginia, the District of Columbia, and Maryland agreed to accept operational control of the airports and raise the money necessary to modernize National and Dulles airports. The Commonwealth of Virginia, the State of Maryland and the District of Columbia have upheld their part of the bargain. Congress should have abided by its part.

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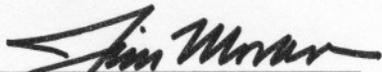
Adding more slots becomes a zero sum gain. The point is being reached where operational and safety constraints imposed by the type of runway and the number of gates, not slots, will soon limit the number of flights the airport is capable of handling. Smaller cities, those that can least afford it from an economic development standpoint, will see their non-stop

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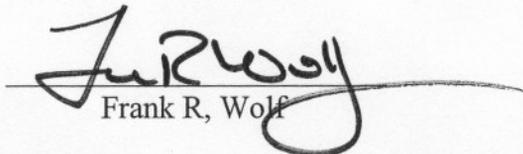
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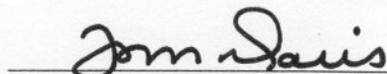
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