



AIR LINE PILOTS ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL

THE WORLD'S LARGEST PILOTS UNION • WWW.ALPA.ORG

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January 2, 2019

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump:

On behalf of the 61,000 pilots of the Air Line Pilots Association, International (ALPA), I am writing to urge you to take the necessary steps to immediately end the shutdown of government agencies that is adversely affecting the safety, security and efficiency of our national airspace system.

The nation's airspace system is a complex transportation network that involves government and industry partnerships to function properly, and the disruptions being caused by the shutdown are threatening the safe operations of this network. The government agency partners in the Department of Transportation (DOT) and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) have dual roles. They are both regulators and service providers. When any of their responsibilities are placed on pause due to a shutdown there are safety, security and efficiency gaps that immediately emerge.

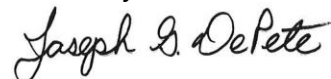
For example, at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) there are fewer safety inspectors than are needed in order to ensure the air traffic control infrastructure is performing at its peak levels of performance. There are also airline and aircraft manufacturing oversight activities that either stop or are significantly reduced. These safety and oversight inspections will potentially allow for the introduction of safety issues that put passengers and airline crews at risk. Although the 2018 holiday season is now behind us, the number of recreational drones, or unmanned aircraft systems (UAS), has likely grown significantly in the past several weeks. The shutdown is a significant stumbling block in the FAA's efforts to ensure the safety of the airspace from those drone operators who may be operating in an unsafe manner.

In addition to the safety oversight role, the FAA air traffic control organization is in the midst of implementing a new communications capability, called Data Communications (Data Comm). The Data Comm program has not yet reached its full implementation capability, and due to the shutdown there will be significant delays to the program. If the shutdown continues, air traffic controllers and pilots previously trained on the system will lose their proficiency due to a lack of use, and re-training will likely be required. The need to re-train will add costs and will no doubt delay the progress of this important airspace system upgrade.

Finally, at both the FAA and at the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), the air traffic controllers, airspace system maintenance personnel, and the airline passenger security workforce are being asked to work unpaid. They are dutifully providing safety of life services while facing increasingly difficult financial pressures to provide for those dependent on their paycheck. The pressure these civil servants are facing at home should not be ignored. At some point, these dedicated federal employees will encounter personal financial damages that will take a long time from which to recover, if at all.

Based on the impacts to the aviation industry including the ALPA membership, we urge you to take the necessary steps to immediately end the shutdown of government agencies that is affecting the safety, security and efficiency of our national airspace system.

Sincerely,



Captain Joe DePete

President

Air Line Pilots Association, International

cc: The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
The Honorable Mitch McConnell
The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
The Honorable Kevin McCarthy