

**STATEMENT OF  
CAPTAIN LEE MOAK  
PRESIDENT  
AIR LINE PILOTS ASSOCIATION, INTERNATIONAL  
BEFORE THE  
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE  
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
ON  
FAA REAUTHORIZATION: ISSUES IN MODERNIZING  
AND OPERATING IN THE NATION'S AIRSPACE  
NOVEMBER 18, 2014**

Chairman Shuster, Ranking Member Rahall, and members of the committee, I am Captain Lee Moak, president of the Air Line Pilots Association, International. Thank you for the opportunity to represent ALPA's more than 51,000 members, who fly for 30 passenger and all-cargo airlines in the United States and Canada, before the committee today.

When it comes to issues of modernizing the airspace in the United States, I'm happy to report that it's on the verge of becoming a success story—and one that you can help us write. We've made considerable progress, during turbulent times, in spite of dealing with issues like sequestration and operating under 23 short-term extensions.

NextGen is a collaborative initiative, involving industry, government, and key users—including airline pilots, controllers, and technicians. The various system components save time, fuel, emissions, and money while increasing safety.

There's no question that our nation's airspace needs an overhaul to prepare for the influx of passengers projected to arrive in our terminals and the continued growth of the cargo industry. And there's no question there's room for growth in our aviation industry. I'd say that we agree on 95 percent of how to achieve that growth. But the 5 percent we disagree on lies in how to pay for it, and who pays for it.

That's the real issue—a lack of commitment when it comes to *dedicating federal resources now* to a problem we know is only going to get worse.

We need *leadership* to set us on a path for continued infrastructure expansion and airspace modernization, so that we can better serve our customers and maintain our position as the *world leader* in aviation.

Continuing the recent tradition of kicking the can down the road will result in failure. I hate failure. ALPA believes that this Committee can fill that leadership role, ensuring that FAA can count on the sustainable, long-term funding needed to get the job done right. However, for the aviation industry to succeed, this funding must come from a source that's separated from the constant jeopardy inherent in the reauthorization process.

We simply cannot put the future of our nation's airspace in the crosshairs of D.C. politics. After all, we're updating the largest, most complex, *and safest* air transportation system in the world. *That requires everyone to be all in.* And up until this point, that hasn't been the case.

Several years ago, several airlines—including my carrier—invested about \$100,000 per aircraft to install controller-pilot data link communications equipment, only for the FAA to cut funding for the program because the Congress couldn't support it.

That put our airlines out millions of dollars, and left them with useless equipment on aircraft. If our airlines invest in new equipment on our airliners, they have to see a return on their investment—not a different plan, from a different administration.

Aviation industry stakeholders want to see that return on investment, too. Pilots, controllers, our airlines—we all want to operate in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, not the 1950s infrastructure we're trying to replace.

While the current air traffic control system isn't perfect, performance-wise, it's still one of the best in the world, consistently pumping 97 percent capacity through the system. In fact, I'd caution that the current operational performance and costs of the U.S. system may not warrant an immediate need for a complete overhaul—namely, creating a stand-alone air traffic service provider, similar to the NavCanada model.

Pilots will continue to operate safely under any ATC structure. I would, however, respectfully offer that the NavCanada model needs a thorough investigation before anyone jumps to the conclusion that it's *the answer* here in the States.

As I mentioned earlier, the U.S. national airspace system is by far the largest, most complex airspace system in the world. The NavCanada model might not translate well to the U.S. system because it only covers roughly a quarter of the airspace and flights we manage. That's our east coast alone.

Do you see the issue here? What has worked well and seems completely manageable in Canada might not even scale to our system's needs. We all know that our system has room to improve, but structural changes to the governance of the Air Traffic Organization will not solve the fundamental problems facing our industry. We first need the debate about reliable funding.

Mr. Chairman, as I've heard you say many times before, America invented aviation. We are *the global leader*. If we want to hold that position, we cannot allow government policies—either through laws, regulations, or taxes—to put us at a competitive disadvantage to the rest of the world.

We already pay 17 unique taxes—the most of any industry. I know you understand that, Mr. Chairman, because you introduced and passed legislation to make those 17 taxes more transparent to the traveling public.

We thank you for that, but we all know that there's more work to do. Out of all those 17 taxes, some do not go back into aviation. I'm sure I speak for many of my colleagues sitting on this panel today when I say we are fed up with being a piggy bank for government programs that have nothing to do with aviation.

That's why I'm asking you to *invest in the U.S. aviation industry*. I am here to underscore that the Air Line Pilots Association is committed to working together to make the tough choices necessary to ensure our aviation system remains the best—and safest—system on the planet. With your leadership, stable funding for U.S. aviation can happen.