

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3004

December 12, 2007

The Honorable Mary E. Peters
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

The Honorable Robert A. Sturgell
Deputy and Acting Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Ave, SW
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Secretary Peters and Administrator Sturgell:

We write you in response to published reports yesterday about a cap on flights at New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport ("JFK"), which we understand the Administration may be preparing to announce as soon as next week. It is our belief that a focus on only one of the region's overflowing airports threatens to put greater strain on the rest of the airports in the area, especially Newark Liberty International Airport. Therefore, the news that you are prepared to announce flight caps only at JFK troubles us.

As Senators from New Jersey, our most immediate concern is with Newark—the airport with the most flight delays in the nation, where the Government Accountability Office has found questionable safety conditions, and where we have seen a recent spike in low-fuel landings. When the schedule reduction meetings at JFK were first announced, the FAA gave our offices assurances that such meetings for Newark were soon to follow. To date those meetings have not taken place.

A cap on flights at JFK reflects an unbalanced approach to a regional problem. Since caps on flights are already in place at LaGuardia Airport, implementing caps on flights at JFK would force all new market entrants to use Newark Airport. This development would make our most delayed airport face the possibility of having even greater delays. Putting additional strain on Newark when it is already nearing the breaking point makes little sense.

We ask you to provide us with a prompt update on your plans for schedule reduction meetings or to impose flight caps at Newark or otherwise deal with delays at Newark. If you do not believe the plan to cap flights only at JFK will adversely affect Newark, we ask for a prompt explanation. And we also ask you for an explanation of the rationale behind focusing the lion's share of your delay reduction efforts on JFK. Caps only at JFK would be unfair to New Jersey travelers and would only worsen flight delay problems in our region.

We thank you for your attention to the matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert Menendez". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and a long, sweeping underline.

ROBERT MENENDEZ
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Frank R. Lautenberg". The signature is cursive and includes a middle initial "R.". The letters are well-defined and connected.

FRANK LAUTENBERG
United States Senator