

June 16, 2015

On June 9, 2015, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) released a new proposed guideline for the size of carry-on bags for airline passengers. While the goal of the IATA standard is to create a uniform international carry-on bag size and reduce confusion for consumers, adoption of this standard could have significant negative consequences for travelers when paired with checked-bag fees. We write today to ask whether your airline intends to adopt the new proposed standard, and if so, how you intend to mitigate the consequences for consumers.

Beginning in 2008, U.S. airlines began instituting checked-bag fees, charging for a service that was previously included in the price of an airline ticket and citing high fuel costs as a justification. Eight years later, U.S. airlines have collected \$21 billion in steadily increasing bag fees—and show no sign of easing up on consumers despite the sharp drop in oil prices. These fees are not taxed and provide no new benefit to consumers—in fact, the understandable decision of more travelers to rely on carry-on luggage often makes boarding a plane cumbersome and difficult. Now, the potential for smaller carry-on requirements leaves passengers with even more bad choices—either pay the costly checked-bag fees, or spring for new luggage that meets the updated standard.

Traveling with luggage is a basic component of air travel and almost always a necessity—not a luxury. If your airline intends to reduce the size of carry-on bags allowed in the cabin, we expect that you will mitigate any additional costs to customers by allowing them to check their luggage without charge.

Given that, we request that you provide a written update on whether your airline plans to adopt the new IATA standard, and if so, whether you intend to eliminate or reduce your checked bag fees to help passengers during the transition. We request the courtesy of your response no later than June 30, 2015. For any questions, please contact Jackie Schmitz of Senator Menendez's staff at (202) 224-4474. Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Robert Menendez
United States Senator

Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator

Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator

Joe Manchin III
United States Senator