



*Association of Professional Flight Attendants*

*Office of the National President*

January 31, 2017

Honorable Elaine Chao  
Office of the Secretary  
United States Department of Transportation  
West Building, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington DC, 20590-9898

Dear Secretary Chao:

Congratulations on your confirmation by the United States Senate as Secretary of Transportation. The overwhelming affirmative vote is a testament to the high regard in which you are held. I am sure your extensive experience at the Department of Transportation and throughout government will serve you well and allow you to “hit the ground running.” I look forward to working with you to advance our common interests.

One issue that I believe deserves your immediate attention is the status of Norwegian Air International’s (NAI) foreign air carrier permit. In the final days of the Obama administration, USDOT effectively signed off on a new paradigm for transatlantic commercial aviation. I do not need to tell you, a former chair of the Federal Maritime Commission, how damaging NAI’s planned flag of convenience scheme will be to the American aviation industry. If we are to avoid a similar fate as the merchant marine, your department will need to act swiftly.

NAI plans to begin flying regularly scheduled routes between Europe and the United States this year, following the December 2, 2016 announcement from USDOT. The Association of Professional Flight Attendants (APFA) adamantly opposed NAI’s permit application. The Obama administration’s decision will allow the carrier to skirt important provisions of the US-European Union Open Skies Agreement and set a dangerous precedent for our industry. Dozens of members of Congress from both parties, as well as airline management and thousands of airline employees see the risks associated with this shift and have spoken out about them.

Honorable Elaine Chao

January 31, 2017

Page 2

As National President of the world's largest independent flight attendant union, representing over 25,000 American workers and their families, I urge you in the strongest possible terms to immediately review the arguments APFA and others have made and reverse this lame duck decision. President Trump rightly called on federal agencies to halt non-essential rulemaking until his administration was firmly in place. This decision on the part of the outgoing Transportation Secretary was an outright rejection of that request and a slap in the face of the hard working men and women who have built the finest commercial aviation system in the world.

I understand the challenges you face as you put your new team in place, but I cannot emphasize enough the critical importance of reversing this eleventh-hour decision. Hundreds of thousands of American workers are counting on you and the Trump Administration to stand up for American workers by keeping the playing fields level. As we have proven time and again, when the competition is fair, American workers win!

Thank you for your consideration of this most important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Bob Ross', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bob Ross

National President

Association of Professional Flight Attendants