

Air Transport Association Testifies on Carrier Initiatives to Manage Flight Delays

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Outdated ATC System Ultimate Hindrance, More Needs to be Done to Improve Service

The Air Transport Association of America (ATA), the industry trade organization representing the leading U.S. airlines, today testified before the Aviation Subcommittee of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure regarding the steps airlines have taken to ensure passengers' needs are met during lengthy flight delays and the industry's ongoing commitment to improving operations.

"The majority of flight delays are due to weather and an aging air traffic control system," said ATA President and CEO James C. May. "We cannot fix the weather, but we can fix the broken ATC system.

"No one hates delays more than the airlines. Delays cost the industry \$9 billion annually. Contrary to claims, airlines do care about their customers and are not satisfied with the status quo," said May.

May continued, "Airlines are responding to this growing flight delay problem by de-peak scheduling and closely monitoring operations in order to minimize lengthy delays. They recognize that when delays do occur, airlines have an obligation to better serve their customers.

"Some of the steps taken to meet customer needs include developing more detailed contingency plans, enabling greater levels of cooperation and communication with airports and government, and ensuring quicker decisions when planes are sitting on the ground. We have made real progress in meeting the needs of passengers during extended delays but we recognize that more needs to be done," said May.

May concluded by saying, "Congress needs to take the real lead in making sure that our outdated, inefficient ATC system is modernized and that all users are paying their fair share of the costs. That is the real answer to the delay problem."

ATA airline members and their affiliates transport more than 90 percent of all U.S. airline passenger and cargo traffic.

Source: Air Transport Association of America

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