

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

June 9, 2023

The Honorable Sam Graves  
Chairman  
U.S. House of Representatives Committee  
on Transportation and Infrastructure  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rick Larsen  
Ranking Member  
U.S. House of Representatives Committee  
on Transportation and Infrastructure  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen:

As Representatives from Congressional districts located within Reagan National Airport's (DCA) 1,250-mile perimeter, we are writing to express our strong opposition to any changes to the High Density ("slot") and perimeter rules at DCA. The proposed changes will put our communities and constituents at risk of losing or having reduced service to the nation's capital<sup>1</sup> and risk further adverse economic impacts to numerous regions around the country.

The perimeter rule ensures fair access to our nation's capital for communities across the United States. According to the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA), DCA operates the most heavily utilized runway in the nation<sup>2</sup> and is already at capacity<sup>3</sup>, with no room to grow or expand its geographic footprint, and therefore cannot accommodate more flights. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) manages congestion at DCA with slots. DCA cannot handle any additional slots, let alone the more than 50 additional slots that have been proposed.<sup>4</sup>

Over the last 16 months, DCA has had the 5<sup>th</sup> most ground delay program and ground stop counts in the country, and a recent analysis by the FAA found that adding 50 slots (25 roundtrip flights) would further increase delays at DCA by 33.2%.<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that recently introduced legislation proposes to add 56 slots (28 roundtrip flights), even more flights than assessed by the FAA, which therefore would lead to even further delays. These additional flights are expected to negatively impact not only operational performance, as the airport would be forced to operate beyond its capacity, but also passenger experience. These are among the reasons why MWAA has long opposed overburdening DCA with additional flights.

It is clear that any changes to the slot and perimeter rules will incentivize airlines to reduce short-haul service for more profitable long-haul service,<sup>6</sup> threatening access for our constituents who live

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<sup>1</sup> "Information on Effects of Federal Statute Limiting Long-Distance Flights," p. 32, *U.S. Government Accountability Office*, November 2020

<sup>2</sup> Reagan National's Runway Is Busiest In America, *Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority*, May 30, 2023

<sup>3</sup> "Airports Authority slams proposal to add more long-distance flights at DCA," *ABC 7 News*, May 17, 2023

<sup>4</sup> H.R. 3185, "Direct Capital Access Act of 2023," introduced May 10, 2023.

<sup>5</sup> *Federal Aviation Administration*, May 25, 2023

<sup>6</sup> Reagan National's Perimeter Rule Seems Here To Stay After Review, *Simple Flying*, December 1, 2020

in cities inside the perimeter and the smaller communities that connect to, or through, Washington – whether at DCA or Dulles International Airport (IAD).<sup>7</sup>

If our constituents lose service to Washington from our state’s airports, including regional airports, the jobs, economic development, and tax revenue that comes with those flights are at risk. Airports – both big and small – are job creators, employing gate agents, rental car services, retail and restaurant workers, air traffic controllers, and many others. Moreover, local businesses rely on linkages to markets like Washington to create economic flows of tourism and professional traffic.

Changes to the slot and perimeter rules threaten these operations with no consideration for the thousands of jobs being put at risk in regional economies across the country, creating a ripple effect in our communities and negatively impacting all who use our airports to fly to Washington and connect to other locations.

Regional airports rely on DCA’s slot and perimeter rules to maintain these critical connections to Washington, D.C., and any changes to these rules pose a threat to those airports and the regional communities they serve.

We strongly oppose any changes to these rules and urge our colleagues to do the same.

Sincerely,



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Mike Bost  
Member of Congress



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Donald S. Beyer Jr.  
Member of Congress



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Steve Womack  
Member of Congress



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Glenn "GT" Thompson  
Member of Congress

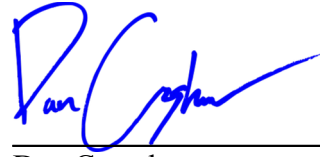
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<sup>7</sup> Airports Authority slams proposal to add more long-distance flights at DCA, [ABC 7 News](#), May 17, 2023



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Donald M. Payne, Jr.  
Member of Congress



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Dan Crenshaw  
Member of Congress



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Robert J. Wittman  
Member of Congress



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Bill Pascrell, Jr.  
Member of Congress



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Gerald E. Connolly  
Member of Congress



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Russell Fry  
Member of Congress



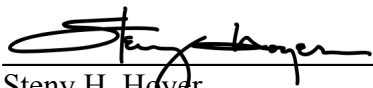
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Jennifer Wexton  
Member of Congress



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Jonathan L. Jackson  
Member of Congress



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Steny H. Hoyer  
Member of Congress



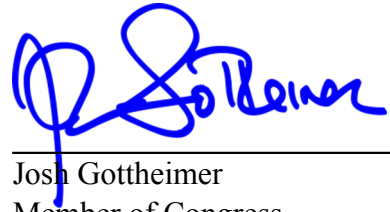
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Nancy Mace  
Member of Congress



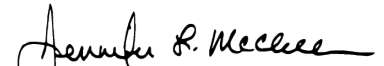
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Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress



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Josh Gottheimer  
Member of Congress



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Jennifer L. McClellan  
Member of Congress



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Robert C. "Bobby" Scott  
Member of Congress



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Chris Deluzio  
Member of Congress



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Morgan McGarvey  
Member of Congress



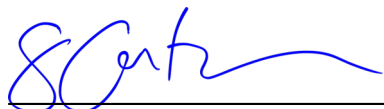
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Donald Norcross  
Member of Congress



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Wesley Hunt  
Member of Congress



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Sean Casten  
Member of Congress




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Christopher H. Smith  
Member of Congress



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Beth Van Duyne  
Member of Congress



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Raja Krishnamoorthi  
Member of Congress



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Colin Z. Allred  
Member of Congress