



U. S. House of Representatives
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
 Washington, DC 20515

John L. Mica
 Chairman

Nick J. Rahall, III
 Ranking Member

August 1, 2011

James W. Coon II, Chief of Staff

James H. Zola, Democrat Chief of Staff

The Honorable Eric Cantor
 House Majority Leader
 Office of the Majority Leader
 H-329, The Capitol
 Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader Cantor:

Ten days ago, all of the capital programs of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) shut down when the most recently enacted short-term FAA extension act expired. As a result, nearly 87,000 family-wage American jobs are in jeopardy; nearly 4,000 FAA engineers, safety analysts, and aviation experts are furloughed without pay; and the Nation has lost more than \$275 million in revenue to the Aviation Trust Fund.

These job and tax losses compound with each passing day that Congress does not act to pass a clean, short-term FAA extension act. We urge you to schedule H.R. 2644, the "Aviation Jobs and Safety Act of 2011", for consideration in the House today.

Since the Republican majority manufactured this crisis by attaching a controversial policy rider to the FAA extension bill, House Republicans have taken no action to resolve this issue and put American construction workers and FAA's safety engineers back to work. Moreover, it is our understanding that the Republican majority may propose to adjourn the House for the August District Work Period after both Chambers vote on legislation to address the debt ceiling – with no action to resolve the FAA issue.

It would be irresponsible for the House Republican leadership to even consider adjourning when we should be staying to find a solution to this senseless shutdown. At the height of the summer travel season and construction season, and with more than 1.3 million construction workers out of work, it is inexcusable that Congress would leave so many American jobs in jeopardy.

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The Republican-led FAA shutdown has caused the FAA to issue 241 stop-work orders on \$11 billion worth of air traffic control and safety-related contracts, and that number will continue to grow as long as Republicans refuse to move this process forward.

As Members of Congress fly back to their districts this week, they may not even notice that our Nation's world-class aviation system has been partially shuttered by Republican intransigence.

But for the 87,000 American workers whose jobs are in jeopardy, the stop-work orders that have been issued over the last 10 days to construction crews and FAA contractors from coast to coast are all too real.

House Republican leaders have the ability to solve this shutdown today and help put 3,600 aviation engineers, scientists, and experts back on the job. Republicans could act today to no longer jeopardize the jobs of nearly 90,000 American workers. There is no legitimate reason why the future of our aviation system deserves to be negotiated at gunpoint. Stop the political games. Do not penalize the people who help keep our skies safe.

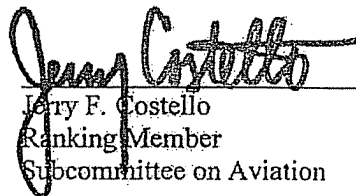
To break this impasse and put Americans back to work, we urge you to schedule H.R. 2644 for consideration in the House today. Enactment of a clean FAA extension act is supported by the U.S. Department of Transportation, Republican Leader of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, National Association of State Aviation Officials, National Association of Counties, National League of Cities, U.S. Conference of Mayors, Airports Council International-North America, American Association of Airport Executives, American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, the National Air Traffic Controllers Association, the Professional Aviation Safety Specialists, Laborers' International Union of North America, California Airports Council, and the City of Houston.

We urge you to work with us to help tens of thousands of Americans get back to their jobs ensuring that the United States aviation system remains the best in the world.

Sincerely,



Nick J. Rahall, II
 Ranking Member
 Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

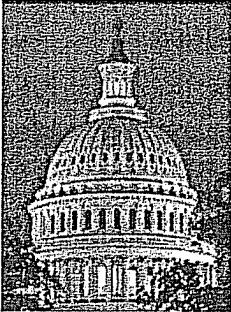


Jerry F. Costello
 Ranking Member
 Subcommittee on Aviation

cc: The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Minority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives
 The Honorable Steny Hoyer, Minority Whip, U.S. House of Representatives
 The Honorable John L. Mica, Chairman, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Senate Titans Trade Shots as FAA Shutdown Continues

By Todd Zwillich | July 27, 2011 – 7:36 pm



The 5-day-old shutdown at the Federal Aviation Administration continued Wednesday, as senators clashed over who's to blame for the standoff.

FAA went into a partial shutdown at midnight on Friday after the law governing the agency expired. Both the House and Senate have a temporary extension of the law teed up, but a spat over a politically-charged bit of union politics continues to divide Republicans and Democrats while keeping most of FAA dark.

Democrat Jay Rockefeller (W.Va.) and Republican Orrin Hatch (Utah), two of the most senior senators, traded barbs on the Senate floor Wednesday over the shutdown. The legislative dustup amounted to little, as 4,000 employees remain furloughed and billions of dollars in aviation construction projects are stalled.

In the immediate sense, the shutdown was caused when the House and Senate passed slightly different versions of a bill temporarily extending FAA's authorization. The difference was a tiny House provision restricting small-airport subsidies to airports where carriers get more than a \$1,000 federal payment per ticket. That's a sum-total of three airports nationwide in the Essential Air Service program.

Senators wanted a "clean" temporary extension. But while the gambit from House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman John Mica annoyed senators, it has little to do with the actual shutdown. That's a full-blown fight over union organizing rules in the aviation and rail industries.

A long-term, full FAA authorization bill is stalled in House-Senate negotiations over a partisan disagreement about federal rules governing how workers can vote to unionize. Last year the National Mediation Board altered rules so that only a majority of workers voting would be needed to unionize a shop. Previously unions had to muster a majority of all workers.

On the Senate floor Wednesday, Rockefeller blasted House Republicans for using the temporary authorization bill to gain leverage on the union rules fight in the bigger bill. He

repeated his charge that the move was designed to protect non-union Delta Airlines, which is hoping to prevent workers from organizing.

“This is not policy it’s pettiness,” Rockefeller said.

Hatch was on hand to counter, saying that Democrats were defending “a big partisan favor done at the behest of Big Labor.”

Rockefeller and Hatch blocked each other’s attempts to pass the temporary FAA authorization bill through the Senate. The standoff continues.

Catch Rep. John Mica on The Takeaway Thursday morning. He’ll be on live to discuss the FAA shutdown and the ongoing congressional fight over the federal debt limit.