



April 19, 2013

Mr. Denis McDonough
Chief of Staff
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. McDonough:

As you know, the sequestration cuts that went into effect on March 1 will lead the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to furlough most of its employees for at least one day per pay period between the end of April and the end of September. Employees subject to furloughs will include air traffic controllers, an unprecedented occurrence that is very concerning to those of us in the aviation community.

There is a reason that air traffic controllers have been exempted from previous furloughs: These frontline safety professionals perform an essential service in facilitating commerce in our country by maintaining a safe and efficient National Airspace System (NAS). Controller staffing should always be based on traffic flow demands, with the safety and efficiency of the system the foremost consideration.

While other federal agencies, such as the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), Customs and Border Protection (CPB), Meat Inspectors (USDA) and Bureau of Prisons (DOJ), have taken steps to avoid furloughing their essential operational personnel, the FAA believes they have not been given the same flexibility. NASA and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission have also taken steps to ensure they will not need to furlough employees in order to reach the required budget reductions, and the Navy recently announced that they are trying to zero out furloughs.

In order to avert the furloughs of air traffic controllers, the FAA must be given funding flexibility so that essential services are maintained during the sequester. It is worth noting that many legal experts believe that the FAA already has this flexibility. This would exclude air traffic controllers from furloughs, and mitigate the effects of sequestration on the capacity of our airspace.

Without action, it will be challenging for air traffic to continue to operate at its current rate of high efficiency. As representatives of the aviation industry, we have always been dedicated to enhancing the efficiency and capacity of the NAS. We are hopeful that the FAA will be given the same flexibility as other agencies to prevent the furlough of essential personnel.

Respectfully,

Capt. Lee Moak, President
Air Line Pilots Association

Peter F. Dumont, President and CEO
Air Traffic Control Association

Craig L. Fuller, President and CEO
Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association

Nicholas E. Calio, President and CEO
Airlines for America

Veda Shook, International President
Association of Flight Attendants

Paul M. Rinaldi, President
National Air Traffic Controllers Association

Thomas L. Hendricks, President and CEO
National Air Transportation Association

Edward M. Bolen, President and CEO
National Business Aviation Association

John Malmborg, President
NetJets Association of Shared Aircraft Pilots

Capt. Mark Richardson, President
Southwest Airlines Pilots' Association

James C. Little, International President
Transport Workers Union of America

