

May 4, 2016

Honorable Peter Neffenger
Administrator
The Transportation Security Administration
601 12th St.
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Administrator Neffenger:

On behalf of The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, the operator of John F. Kennedy International, Newark Liberty International and LaGuardia airports, we respectfully but urgently ask that The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) provide sufficient staffing in order to ensure effective and efficient passenger screening for the 126 million air travelers who use our facilities annually.

Passenger wait times at TSA screening points at Port Authority airports have risen dramatically in recent months, prompting angry complaints from passengers, terminal operators, and airlines alike citing inconvenience, delayed flights and missed flight connections. At JFK alone, during the period March 15 - April 15, there were 253 occurrences of 20+ minute waits in 2016 versus just 10 instances over the same period in 2015. JFK's daily average of maximum wait times during this period was up 82%, from 11.5 minutes in 2015 to 20.9 minutes in 2016, while the absolute maximum in 2016 was 55 minutes, up from 30 minutes in 2015. The experience at EWR and LGA has been similarly abysmal, and the patience of the flying public has reached a breaking point.

Please keep in mind that flight activity at Port Authority airports is extremely important to the regional economy, supporting 580,000 jobs and generating \$85 billion in annual economic activity. With the peak, summer travel season approaching, we are concerned that further increases in screening point wait times will only exacerbate customer dissatisfaction, pushing passengers to opt for alternate modes of transportation or simply cancel their travel plans outright. Given the adverse customer service and economic impacts, we can no longer tolerate the continuing inadequacy of TSA passenger screening services.

While we understand that TSA is currently operating under a Congressional cap on the number of screeners, we urge the agency to take all appropriate measures to devote more of its existing resources to core, passenger-screening functions:

- Use contract personnel for behavior detection functions, freeing up TSA Behavior Detection Officers to perform the Travel Document Checker (TDC) function, in turn freeing up TDCs to conduct passenger screening.
- Use contract personnel to assist with queue management and passenger divesting of shoes, objects in pockets, etc., freeing TSA agents to perform screening.
- Empower each airport Federal Security Director to make local decisions on resource allocation, overtime, etc. without having to consult with TSA Headquarters in Washington.
- Intensify efforts to promote and market the Pre-Check program, in which only approximately 9M out of a TSA-projected 25M people have enrolled.

In the meantime, the Port Authority is exploring the merits of participating in the Screening Partnership Program to enhance flexibility in the assignments and operating hours of front line screening staff.

The Port Authority fully recognizes and appreciates the challenging mission that TSA must perform every day at airports across the nation. We stand ready to assist and continue to work with you to promote the security and efficiency of air travel.

Yours truly,



Thomas Bosco
Director
Aviation Department



Thomas Belfiore
Chief Security Officer

Cc: Marisa Maola, Regional Director, Region 1, TSA