

July 1, 2013

The Honorable Michael Froman  
Ambassador  
United States Trade Representative  
600 17th Street NW  
Washington, DC 20508

Dear Ambassador Froman:

We understand that the United States Trade Representative (USTR) will attempt to negotiate a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) with our allies in the European Union (EU). We wish to express our strong opposition to the inclusion of commercial aviation traffic rights traditionally covered by bilateral air services agreements from any agreement that may come out of these negotiations and respectfully request that the USTR inform the EU that issues covered by air services agreements will not be a part of the negotiations.

Historically, "air transport services" have been negotiated by the Department of State and Department of Transportation. These two agencies are well equipped to do this and possess the necessary expertise to negotiate on behalf of the commercial aviation industry and its employees. Agreements negotiated under this regime have reduced the number of trade barriers to international air transport services in a fair and equitable manner. Any request to add air traffic rights to the TTIP negotiations is an attempt by the EU to circumvent the established process for negotiating an air services agreement because they are not satisfied with the current U.S.-EU air transport agreement. There is no reason to change an effective and efficient process that over the last 20 years has produced 107 "Open Skies" air transport agreements.

In negotiating a free trade agreement with the EU, USTR will be negotiating what would be the largest free trade agreement in the history of our country. However, the USTR must dedicate its resources and expertise to negotiating in the sectors of our economy with which it has the most experience. This is a daunting task for USTR. For this reason, and the reasons mentioned above, we encourage USTR to insist that agreements over matters pertaining to international air traffic rights will continue to be negotiated by the Department of State and Department of Transportation.

Sincerely,

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