



April 25, 2024

The U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation  
254 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The U.S. House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure  
2165 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Cantwell and Ranking Member Cruz, Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen, and Members of the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and Members of the U.S. House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure,

We are proud members of the [Capital Access Alliance](#) (CAA), a coalition of transportation and business leaders from around the country seeking to make air travel to and from Washington, D.C. more accessible and affordable. We are writing today to ask for your support in adding more flights at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport (DCA) in this year's Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Reauthorization Act.

The U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation recently approved a bipartisan provision to add five new slot pairs at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport (DCA) in the committee markup of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Reauthorization bill. We were pleased to see the provision pass with strong bipartisan support, as it will increase affordable access between Washington, D.C. and communities like ours.

There is more work to be done to ensure this modest increase in flights is included in the final FAA Reauthorization bill that will be voted on by the full Congress. We are counting on your support for including these additional flights, which will boost competition, lower ticket prices, and ensure travel to and from Washington, D.C. is accessible and affordable for all.

The five additional slot pairs represent a very reasonable, bipartisan compromise. Many U.S. House members and Senators supported legislation at the beginning of this effort that would have added as many as 28 additional flights at DCA. Given the fact that [FAA data](#) shows DCA could handle that many new flights, the five additional flights approved in committee are exceedingly manageable.

Today, consumers traveling to or from the national capital region pay the [highest](#) ticket prices of any metropolitan area in the nation. In fact, Dulles International Airport (IAD) was named the [most expensive](#) airport in the country for domestic travel with an average ticket price of nearly \$500. This is due in large part to an outdated federal perimeter rule, which limits the number of

flights per day at DCA. Fewer choices have only led to higher prices. Modernizing the perimeter rule by adding these five new flights will be a positive step towards lowering airfare for consumers.

There are multiple windows during the day when DCA's runway capacity exceeds demand. In fact, FAA Administrator Michael Whitaker [acknowledged](#) there was room for more capacity at a recent hearing before the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. This has also been confirmed by former FAA Administrator Michael Huerta, as well as a 30-year certified air traffic controller.

DCA is one of the top-performing airports in the nation. It leads the national capital region in on-time departures and arrivals, which includes IAD and Baltimore-Washington International Airport (BWI). Per The Washington Post, a leading travel data provider ranked DCA as one of the [top five](#) airports in North America, with an 80 percent on-time arrival rate.

The 1960s-era perimeter rule has burdened consumers for too long. A modest increase of five slot pairs at DCA will support modern air travel needs by increasing affordable and efficient access to Washington, D.C. The Capital Access Alliance respectfully urges you to support this bipartisan compromise when you vote on the FAA Reauthorization bill in the coming weeks.

Sincerely,

Associated Builders and Contractors of Greater Michigan

Carlsbad Chamber of Commerce

Connoisseur Travel

Consumer Technology Association

Delta Air Lines

El Paso Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

Global Travel

Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce

greater:SATX

Junior Achievement of Southern California

Montana Chamber of Commerce

North San Antonio Chamber of Commerce

Omega World Travel

Research Triangle Institute

San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

Salt Lake Chamber

San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership

Stemtac Foundation

Travel Portland

Virginia Asian Chamber of Commerce

Visit San Antonio

Washington Build Back Black Alliance

### **About CAA**

*CAA consists of diverse members from around the country and various industries, including transportation, general business groups, the small business sector, entrepreneurs and job creators, organizations focused on economic development and leaders in the civic and policy communities.*

Learn more about Capital Access Alliance [HERE](#).

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