

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 30, 2011

Mr. Richard Anderson
CEO, Delta Air Lines
Chair, Air Transport Association
1301 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20004

Mr. Anderson,

Like you, we are discouraged that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has been shut down. As a result of this shut down, vital aviation improvements are being put off, thousands of FAA employees have been furloughed, and the Aviation Trust Fund, the fund needed to maintain our aviation system, has effectively been shuttered.

Given these dramatic turn of events, we are dismayed by public reports that some airlines are taking advantage of everyday Americans. Specifically, we understand that some airlines are continuing to charge passengers for the cost of federal aviation taxes on their tickets even though these taxes have expired, and keeping the money for themselves.

Consumers quite frankly are being taken advantage of by these airlines. Instead of taking advantage of the FAA shut down, airlines should be passing these immediate savings on to the consumers now. However, it appears that most airlines have taken the alternative route by increasing prices and their profits at the expense of everyday Americans.

In addition, we are concerned about those consumers who purchased their tickets and paid the applicable excise taxes prior to the FAA shut down. These passengers, who are traveling during this shut down, are entitled to a refund for these federal taxes paid when they purchased their ticket. The Internal Revenue Service has requested airlines assistance in facilitating these refunds. Airlines are best suited to do so because they already have the purchaser information and can streamline refunds. However, so far airlines have declined to do so.

Therefore, we urge the Air Transport Association (ATA) and all of your member airlines to charge the same price for airfare that you did immediately before the FAA shutdown. In addition, for those passengers who already paid federal excise taxes for travel scheduled during the FAA shutdown or who were forced to pay more for their base airfare because of their profiteering tactics after the FAA shutdown took effect, they should immediately be given a refund of those cost overruns.

In these extraordinary times when so many Americans are out of work or simply trying to make ends meet, airlines should not be taking advantage of things like an FAA shutdown to increase their profits. We look forward to hearing from the ATA regarding this important issue.

Sincerely,

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Paul Lowery

Donna Matsumi

Pat A. DeFazio

John Starnelli

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Sam Lee

Paul G. [unclear]

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