

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 23, 2019

The Honorable Michael Pompeo
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

The Honorable Elaine Chao
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Pompeo and Secretary Chao,

As you prepare for the upcoming 40th Session of the Assembly of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), we believe you should strongly advocate for Taiwan's participation as an observer at the Session.

Taiwan's Civil Aeronautics Administration exclusively administers the Taipei Flight Information Region (Taipei FIR), which they report served 1.75 million flights and 68.9 million passengers in 2018. The Taipei FIR is also home to Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport, which the Airports Council International preliminarily listed in 2018 as the eleventh busiest airport in the world in terms of international passenger traffic and the fifth for international air freight traffic.¹ The Taipei FIR's centrality to regional air travel makes Taiwan's participation in ICAO's discussions critical. We believe excluding Taiwan from ICAO deliberations on topics ranging from aviation security to economic issues delays the implementation of ICAO regulations and prevents the seamless integration of the Taipei FIR into Asia's civil aviation architecture. Furthermore, we believe Taiwan's exclusion jeopardizes the proper formulation of changes to this architecture by failing to consider the needs and perspectives of Taiwan's regulators.

In 2013, Taiwan participated at ICAO's 2013 session as a special guest of the ICAO Council President. Unfortunately, under pressure from the People's Republic of China (PRC), a similar invitation to ICAO's last session in 2016 was not extended. Beijing's self-serving foreign policy not only deprives the international community of Taiwan's contributions but also endangers the millions of travelers who pass through the Taipei FIR annually.

Aviation safety must not be a political issue. As ICAO prepares for its Assembly Session, we appreciate your timely attention to this matter. In April, the foreign ministers of the G7 issued a Communique which, among other topics, addresses international aviation and states, "We support the substantive participation of all active members of the international aviation community in ICAO forums. Excluding some of its members for political purposes compromises aviation safety

¹ Airports Council International, "Preliminary world airport traffic rankings released," March 13, 2019. <https://aci.aero/news/2019/03/13/preliminary-world-airport-traffic-rankings-released/> (accessed September 18, 2019).

and security.”² We believe that the United States and likeminded countries should work to make this aspiration a reality.

Sincerely,

Steve Chabot

J.J.J.

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Brian K. Fitzpatrick

Mick

John

Ken Gray

Jim Baker

James

Eric L. Engel

Bob

James M. Githinji

Samuel D. Bishop Jr

Frank Johnson

Don

Bonnie Watson Coleman

Bonnie Watson Coleman

² G7 Foreign Ministers Meeting, “Foreign Ministers Communique,” June 4, 2019, <https://www.elysee.fr/admin/upload/default/0001/04/d87f23f4f53892053e29e22aa912a7c4c3c5109c.pdf> (accessed September 20, 2019).

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