



July 7, 2008

The Honorable Jim Oberstar
Chairman
House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jerry F. Costello
Chairman
Subcommittee on Aviation
2251 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Oberstar and Congressman Costello:

The American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA) and the Interactive Travel Services Association (ITSA) are seriously concerned about, and oppose, a provision in Section 102 of H.R. 6355, the Air Service Improvement Act of 2008, that would create a new Section 42303 ("Use of insecticides in passenger aircraft") of Title 49 of the United States Code. This section would require that air travelers be advised before purchasing a ticket that an insecticide, identified by name, has been applied within the last 60 days or will be applied while the traveler is on the aircraft. This is a complex issue with significant international implications. Tracking insecticide applications would involve a major investment in software and training that would amount to a significant unfunded mandate. For these reasons, ASTA and ITSA believe this provision to be ill-advised, that it should be reconsidered, and that it should not be included in any House passenger rights bill.

International law authorizes spraying of insecticides on airplanes traveling across borders. Some 21 countries mandate such applications, but with differing requirements; others presumably permit them. Simply tracking whether a plane has gone to one of these countries in the last 60 days, let alone whether it was scheduled or actually treated, not to mention routine switches of aircraft among routes, would require a sophisticated and expensive software solution to bridge a gap between the maintenance scheduling system of the carriers and the GDS reservation systems. Without such a solution, travel agents, who depend upon GDS information, would be unable to provide notifications; the costs of such a solution would almost surely have to be passed on to consumers.

Therefore, in light of the complexities and costs of this proposed provision for the transportation industry and for consumers, ASTA and ITSA urge you to remove this provision from H.R. 6355 before reporting it out of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cheryl Hudak".

Cheryl Corey Hudak, CTC
President
ASTA

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Arthur B. Sackler".

Arthur B. Sackler
Executive Director
ITSA

cc: The Hon. John Mica, Ranking Member