



February 10, 2009

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), the Interactive Travel Services Association (ITSA), and the Business Travel Coalition (BTC) are seriously concerned about, and oppose, a provision in Title IV, Section 406 of H.R. 915, the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2009, that would create a new Section 42303 ("Use of insecticides in passenger aircraft") in 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 the 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. Online travel companies would also not be able to provide such notifications. Imposing such a burden at this very difficult juncture for our economy, would add an untimely drag on one of the few industries that could have a chance to stimulate some additional revenues: travel and tourism.

Therefore, in light of the complexities and costs of this proposed provision for the transportation industry and for consumers, ASTA, ITSA, and the BTC urge you to remove this provision from H.R. 915 before reporting it out of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Chris Russo in blue ink.

Chris Russo  
President  
ASTA

Handwritten signature of Arthur B. Sackler in blue ink.

Arthur B. Sackler  
Executive Director  
ITSA

Handwritten signature of Kevin Mitchell in blue ink.

Kevin Mitchell  
Chairman  
Business Travel Coalition

cc: The Hon. John Mica, Ranking Member