



THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

April 21, 1998

DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION
DOCKET SECTION
98 MAY -6 PM 4:19

The Honorable Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
U. S . House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

OST-96-1700-131
OST-97-3285-40

Dear Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen:

Thank you for your letter concerning the American Airlines-TACA Group application for authority to conduct code-share operations between the United States and six Central America countries (Docket OST-96-1700); and the American-Lan Chile application for approval of and antitrust immunity for an alliance agreement (Docket OST-97-3285).

By Order 97-12-35, issued December 31, 1997, the Department tentatively decided to approve with several conditions the American-TACA Group code-share application. Several interested parties, including the Department of Justice, have filed comments regarding the Department's tentative decision.

By Order 98-2-21, issued February 20, 1998, the Department established a procedural schedule for the filing of answers and replies in the American-Lan Chile antitrust immunity case. Several interested parties have filed in opposition to this request.

As both of these proceedings are currently pending before the Department and have been contested, I am sure you understand that the Department's rules preclude me from commenting on their merits at this time. I can assure you that we will consider all relevant factors in reaching our decisions. I will also see that you receive a copy of the Department's findings in each case.

In accordance with the Department's Rules of Conduct (14 C.F.R. Part 300), I am placing a copy of your letter and my response in the correspondence section of Dockets OST-96-1700 and OST-97-3285, as well as in the file for views submitted outside the formal record of these cases. If you have any further questions, please contact me or Steven Palmer, Assistant Secretary for Governmental Affairs, at (202) 366-4573.

I appreciate your interest in this matter.

Sincerely

Rodney E. Slater

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN
18TH DISTRICT, FLORIDA

March 23, 1998

The Honorable Rodney Slater
Secretary
US Department of Transportation
400 Seventh Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Slater:

As a member representing Miami, I respectfully urge the Department of Transportation to expeditiously complete its review of the codesharing agreement proposed by American Airlines and the TACA Group (OST-96-1700), an agreement that has now been pending at the Department for nearly 20 months. I also request that the Department complete its consideration of the antitrust and codeshare applications submitted by American Airlines and Lan Chile on December 23, 1997.

American Airlines in partnership with the South Florida community has steadily built Miami International Airport into a world-class international hub, attracting economic activity into South Florida and making South Florida a vibrant international business center.

Since 1995, the DOT policy favoring codesharing relationships between the US and Foreign airlines has fundamentally changed the nature of international aviation. These globally based link network agreements have made communities the hub airports the center of economic activity and have greatly increased passenger service.

DOT should act expeditiously to complete the review of the aforementioned agreements in order that Miami International Airport and the South Florida community may enjoy the benefits of these agreements. In doing so, your Department will open the door to increased service and competition from Miami to Central and South America, greater price and service options in those markets, and an array of consumer benefits such as fully reciprocal frequent flyer agreements for passengers.

DOT's prompt and favorable review of these two transactions will be a good start in giving Miami and South Florida a fair chance to enjoy the rewards experienced by other communities with similar agreements already in place. Thank you for your consideration of these important matters.

Sincerely,

Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
Member of Congress

IRL:jt

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