



May 29, 2026

The Honorable Markwayne Mullin  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Mullin:

On behalf of the International Air Transport Association (IATA)<sup>1</sup> and its member airlines, I am writing to express our deep concern regarding any proposal by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to reduce or suspend entirely customs and immigration services at Newark Liberty International Airport (EWR). Such an action would have far-reaching consequences that extend well beyond a single airport, affecting global passenger and cargo flows, and the broader domestic and global economy.

Suspending U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) services at a major international gateway like EWR would restrict the ability of foreign airlines to exercise their traffic rights under existing U.S. Open Skies Agreements and depart from the expectation that governments provide robust border control infrastructure at major international hubs. A sudden withdrawal of such services would raise serious concerns among international partners about the United States' reliability in upholding its aviation obligations, potentially inviting reciprocal actions or undermining decades of cooperative aviation policy.

The disruption to global passenger flows would be immediate and profound. According to the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey's Airport Traffic Report, in 2025, EWR had 103,609 international aircraft movements -- on average 284 flights per day -- primarily from Europe, Canada, the Caribbean, Mexico, Latin America and Asia. Over half of the airport's total freight throughput is via international shipments. Eliminating CBP processing would force passenger and cargo airlines to reroute international flights to other entry points. Unfortunately, as a Level 3 slot-controlled airport, JFK would not be an option in this regard, thereby severely limiting international access to the entire New York region. Airlines would incur substantial logistical and financial burdens, including the reshuffling of aircraft, crews, and schedules, all of which would degrade service quality and reliability. In a system as interconnected as global aviation, the removal of one major node creates ripple effects that are felt worldwide.

Furthermore, the economic impact of this would be significant. EWR is a major driver of economic activity for the New York-New Jersey region and a vital artery for international

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<sup>1</sup> IATA is the trade association of the world's airlines, representing some 370 passenger and cargo airlines, more than 100 of which serve the U.S. market. IATA works with its U.S. and foreign airline members to promote safe, reliable, and secure air travel.

tourism, trade, and investment. Reduced international service would mean fewer visitors, diminished cargo capacity, and lost revenue for airlines, airports, and ancillary industries such as hospitality, retail, and logistics.

We acknowledge that the administration is considering this action as a means to advance important federal law enforcement objectives. However, we believe the far-reaching damage the suspension of CBP resources at EWR would do to international commercial aviation and the industries and passengers that rely on it argue for consideration of alternative means of achieving these goals.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Douglas E. Lavin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Douglas E. Lavin  
Vice President, Member and External Relations – North America  
lavind@iata.org

cc: The Honorable Sean P. Duffy, Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation  
The Honorable Rodney S. Scott, Commissioner, U.S. Customs and Border Protection