



WASHINGTON AVIATION SUMMARY

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The Kirstein & Young law firm specializes in representing U.S. and foreign airlines, airports, leasing companies, financial institutions and aviation-related companies before U.S. Government agencies, Congress, the courts and in commercial and financing matters.

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I. **REGULATORY NEWS**

1. **Airline Delays Rise as Government Shutdown Takes Place.**

The U.S. federal government entered a shutdown at midnight on September 30 due to a lapse in funding, and employees were furloughed or required to work without pay. Staffing shortages at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Transportation Security Administration (TSA) caused increasing air traffic disruptions throughout the month. On October 26, real-time flight tracking showed 8,000 delays across the United States, compared to 5,300 the previous day; FAA issued a temporary ground stop at Los Angeles International Airport because of an air traffic controller shortage. On October 28, controllers missed their first full paycheck after receiving a partial payment on October 14. . . . The National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA) said controllers and other aviation safety professionals are working without pay, often six days a week, 10 hours a day, some taking second jobs to feed their families and pay bills, leading to stress and fatigue. Approximately 2,350 NATCA-represented aviation safety professionals—including aircraft certification engineers and aerospace engineers—are furloughed. Critical safety support, operational support, and modernization work stop during a shutdown. . . . Airlines for America, airlines and labor unions urged Congress to resolve the funding stalemate and immediately reopen the federal government. Many groups, including Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA), airports and food banks, donated meals to air traffic controllers, TSA officers and other essential workers affected by the shutdown. . . . U.S. Travel Association estimated that the U.S. travel economy was losing \$1 billion each week due to the shutdown; on October 28 its real time cost ticker registered almost \$4 billion to date. Congressional failure to restore funding is doing real, irreversible damage, said U.S. Travel CEO Geoff Freeman. “The longer this drags on, the worse the cascade of damage will be.” . . . Labor unions sued the Administration for violating the law by threatening to fire federal workers furloughed due to the shutdown and ordering employees to work unpaid.

2. **ICAO Rejects Proposal to Raise Pilot Retirement Age.**

The 42nd Assembly of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) closed, agreeing to continue evidence-based review of pilot age limits, confirming that any decision to raise the limit to 67 years will be guided strictly by comprehensive data analysis and safety considerations. The Assembly adopted major updates to global and regional frameworks for safety, security, cybersecurity, air navigation and innovation. Sean Duffy, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), in a speech made on behalf of President

Trump, chastised ICAO for “wasting critical resources on social programs or climate financing initiatives,” and a “lack of focus [and] endless bureaucracy,” and warned that U.S. financial commitments “come with the basic expectation that this organization can and will accomplish its core responsibilities.” He said “bad actors” who fail to meet their international obligations or otherwise compromise the safety and security of global aviation should not be given a seat at the table; that states that endanger the airspace, launch cyberattacks, or scramble aviation communications have no place on the governing bodies or in ICAO leadership roles. He called for Taiwan to be “meaningfully included in ICAO’s technical activities,” underscored the importance of international cooperation to combat human trafficking, smuggling, and exploitation; and urged work on “harmonized regulatory approaches to foster the aviation technologies of the future.”

3. DOT Delays Enforcement of Wheelchair Rules.

DOT delayed enforcement of certain provisions of the December 2024 final rule on “Ensuring Safe Accommodations for Air Travelers With Disabilities Using Wheelchairs” (Wheelchair Rule) until December 31, 2026. The provisions, related to airline liability for mishandled wheelchairs, frequency of refresher training, pre-departure notifications, and fare difference reimbursements, are being considered for revision in a new rulemaking titled “Airline Obligations to Accommodate Air Travelers with Disabilities Using Wheelchairs” (Wheelchair Rule II). The notice does not affect enforcement of requirements in Wheelchair Rule I beyond the four identified issues, said DOT.

4. DOT Cancels 13 Mexican Carrier Routes to U.S.

DOT Secretary Sean Duffy issued a new order cancelling all combination service between the United States and Mexico City Felipe Ángeles International Airport (NLU). The order freezes growth of Mexican carriers’ combination services between the United States and Benito Juarez International (MEX). DOT also issued an order to show cause to prohibit Mexican passenger airlines from transporting belly cargo between MEX and the United States. Comments are due on November 11. Mexican carriers affected are Aeromexico, Volaris and Viva Aerobus. Mexico has not been in compliance with the 2015 U.S.-Mexico Air Transport Agreement since 2022, said Duffy, beginning “when it abruptly rescinded U.S. passenger carriers’ slots and then forced U.S. all-cargo carriers to relocate operations,” said Duffy. “Mexico claimed its actions were temporary to allow for construction to alleviate congestion at MEX that has yet to materialize three years later. By restricting slots and mandating that all-cargo operations move out of MEX, Mexico has broken its promise, disrupted the market, and left American businesses holding the bag for millions in increased costs.” The Administration

is “taking note of multiple other countries that are disregarding the terms of our air transport agreements. For example, we are monitoring European states to ensure that they apply the Balanced Approach process for noise abatement at their airports and do not implement unjustified operational restrictions. The Department is committed to enforcing our agreements to ensure that aviation markets are fair and pro-competitive.”

5. Delta, Aeromexico Challenge DOT Order Blocking JV.

Delta and Aeromexico filed a legal challenge to DOT’s September order that terminated approval of their joint venture agreement and withdrew antitrust immunity. “Mexico has not taken meaningful action to remedy their noncompliance with the 2015 U.S.-Mexico Air Transport Agreement,” said DOT at the time; the joint venture must wind down by January 1, but they can continue code sharing, marketing, and frequent flyer cooperation. Delta can retain its equity stake in Aeromexico and both carriers can maintain all existing flying in the U.S.-Mexico market unimpeded. . . . In other news, Grupo Aeromexico is planning an initial public offering; Delta will not participate.

6. Funding Secured for EAS During Gov’t Shutdown.

DOT secured \$41 million in funding to sustain the Essential Air Service (EAS) program amid the government shutdown. Should funding lapse, DOT will suspend contractual obligations of the air carriers providing EAS and will suspend reimbursement under Alternate Essential Air Service (AEAS) grants until full budgetary authority is reinstated.

7. FAA Allows Increase in Boeing Production Rate.

FAA approved Boeing’s request to increase 737 MAX production to 42 per month. The rate was capped at 38 after the January 2024 Alaska Airlines door plug blowout. FAA said safety inspectors conducted extensive reviews of Boeing production lines to ensure that this small production rate increase will be done safely, adding: “Our direct oversight of Boeing’s production processes, implementation of its Safety Management System, and whistleblower protections has not changed. Safety critical personnel, including inspectors at Boeing, are continuing to work during the government shutdown.” . . . The European Commission approved Boeing’s proposed acquisition of Spirit AeroSystems, conditional upon full compliance with commitments offered by the companies. Boeing will divest Spirit’s businesses that currently supply Airbus with aerostructures to Airbus; and Spirit’s site in Malaysia, which supplies, among others, Airbus with aerostructures, goes to Composites Technology Research Malaysia.

8. South Korea's Parata Air Applies for Foreign Air Carrier Permit.

Parata Air applied to DOT for a foreign air carrier permit and an exemption authorizing it to engage in scheduled and charter air transportation between South Korea and the United States and beyond. Parata Air plans to begin operations on March 29, for the 2026 summer season, using Airbus A330-200 aircraft. Proposed scheduled routes are Seoul Incheon to Las Vegas and Los Angeles. The carrier, formerly Fly Gangwon, is owned by Winix.

9. Proposed Rule Reinstates 2020 Unfair, Deceptive Practices Procedures.

The DOT published an NPRM proposing to reverse the previous administration's streamlining of the rulemaking process. The NPRM would (1) reinstate the procedures for discretionary rulemaking hearings contained in the December 2020 rule entitled "Defining Unfair or Deceptive Practices" and (2) rescind a February 2022 rule entitled "Procedures in Regulating Unfair or Deceptive Practices". The NPRM also states the DOT intends to later rescind August 2022 Guidance entitled "Guidance Regarding Interpretation of Unfair or Deceptive Practices".

II. AIRPORTS

1. Construction Completed on \$1.7 Billion Pittsburgh Terminal.

Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro was among dignitaries at the ribbon cutting ceremony for the new terminal at Pittsburgh International, set to open this fall (2025). The project, which broke ground in 2021, had unanimous support of the airport's airline partners, which are covering most of the \$1.7 billion cost. No local tax dollars were used to fund the project. In the past decade, the airport has increased its nonstop destination network from 36 to 61 and expanded number of airlines from seven to 15.

2. LAX Terminal 5 Closure.

Airlines at Los Angeles International Terminal 5 have relocated to the newly-completed Midfield Satellite Concourse South (MSC South) and other existing terminals; MSC South is an extension of the West Gates at Tom Bradley International Terminal. Terminal 5 is being demolished to make way for a new terminal expected to be open in time for the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The airport is undergoing a \$30 billion capital improvement program.

3. Frankfurt's New Terminal 3 Prepares for April 22 Inauguration.

Inspections by authorities were successfully concluded and the new Terminal 3 at Frankfurt Airport is preparing to start operations on April 22, 2026. Final stage of work includes installing 21 security check lanes, completing food and shopping areas, and ongoing testing of the baggage handling system. A comprehensive test operation of the new infrastructure will occur between January 27 and April 16 with 8,000 test passengers to ensure that all processes mesh seamlessly. Construction of Terminal 3 began in October 2015. When it opens, initial configuration with Piers G, H and J will have capacity for up to 19 million passengers a year. A total of 57 airlines currently based in Terminal 2 will move to Terminal 3 in four phases between mid-April and early June. "Despite the pandemic, the war in Ukraine and massive disruptions of global supply chains, we've succeeded in implementing the new terminal on schedule and on budget," said Fraport officials.

4. Glasgow Completes £3.7 Million Project.

Glasgow completed a £3.7 million investment program in partnership with retailers and hospitality operators, which includes upgrades to existing airside and landside retail units and enhancements to the main departure lounge. A major airport project includes ongoing upgrades to the main terminal building, airfield infrastructure, and energy efficiency initiatives.

5. Macquarie to Acquire Additional Stake in London City Airport.

Macquarie Asset Management agreed to acquire a further 50% equity stake in London City from Alberta Investment Management Corp. and OMERS, bringing total ownership to 75%. In June, Macquarie agreed to acquire a 25% stake from Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan. London City handles 50,000 flights per year to 30 leisure and business destinations across the UK and Europe. The UK government approved plans to increase passenger numbers to 9 million from previous 6.5 million capacity, and has applied to the Civil Aviation Authority for approval to operate a broader range of aircraft.

6. India Inaugurates Two Airports.

India's Prime Minister Modi presided over the inauguration of Navi Mumbai (NMIA), the city's second international airport. NMIA will begin operating in December with a single runway and terminal and handling capacity of 20 million passengers per annum. NMIA will accommodate up to 90 million passengers annually in its full build-out, with four runways, multiple terminals, and a dedicated cargo terminal and facilities for perishables and express cargo. Envisioned as part of a dual-airport system for the Mumbai Metropolitan Region, NMIA will complement Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International. NMIA is a Public Private Partnership between Mumbai International Airport Limited (MIAL), a subsidiary of Adani Airports Holdings Limited (AAHL), with a 74% stake, and the City and Industrial Development Corporation of Maharashtra Limited (CIDCO), with the remaining 26%. The multimodal hub, designed by Zaha Hadid Architects, "draws inspiration from the lotus flower, a timeless symbol in Indian culture . . . the terminal roof suggesting petals and the central atrium resembles a lotus pond." . . . Noida International (NIA) also was inaugurated in October. Located in Jewar (Uttar Pradesh), NIA is being developed by Yamuna International Airport Private Limited, a subsidiary of Zurich Airport International, in close partnership with the governments of Uttar Pradesh and India. First phase, with one runway and one terminal, will have capacity to handle 12 million passengers annually, and 70 million after completion of fourth phase.

III. SECURITY AND DATA PRIVACY

1. EU Introduces Biometric Entry/Exit System (EES).

European countries are introducing the Entry-Exit System (EES), which replaces manual stamping of passports with biometric registration for non-EU nationals in the Schengen Area. EU citizens, Swiss travelers and those with valid residence permits for the EU or Switzerland can continue to travel as usual. EES allows automatic detection of travelers who exceed the maximum duration of their authorized stay, and contributes to the prevention of irregular migration. The gradual launch is expected to be completed in April.

2. CLEAR+ Expands to Include Visitors from 40 Countries.

Secure identity company CLEAR expanded CLEAR+ enrollment to include visitors from 40 countries across Europe, Asia and the Americas; initial enrollment was from Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the UK. CLEAR is also expanding the eGates program, which allows you to scan a boarding pass when you enter the CLEAR+ lane, walk to the eGate to verify with face-first technology, then go directly to baggage screening without stopping at a CLEAR Pod or TSA podium.

IV. TECHNOLOGY AND EQUIPMENT

1. Agency Air Ticket Sales Reach Record \$8.7 Billion in September.

U.S. travel agency air ticket sales reached a record \$8.7 billion in September, an 8% increase over last year, according to Airlines Reporting Corp. (ARC). Third-quarter sales and passenger trips reached a record \$25.1 billion and 74.7 million, respectively.

2. Alaska Airlines IT Outage Leads to Systemwide Ground Stop.

A significant IT outage led to a systemwide ground stop for Alaska Airlines and Horizon Air flights, causing delays and cancellations. The airline said the outage was “a failure at our primary data center,” and not a cybersecurity incident. It “impacted several of our key systems that enable us to run various operations, necessitating the implementation of the ground stop to keep our aircraft in position. The safety of our flights was never compromised.” Hawaiian Airlines flights were not affected. . . . Delta and United were among companies affected by a disruption of Amazon’s cloud computing service, with some passengers unable to access check-in, baggage or reservations functions for several hours. . . . Public address systems were hacked at Harrisburg International in Pennsylvania, Windsor International in Ontario, and Kelowna International and Victoria International in British Columbia. Canadian and American authorities are investigating the incidents. The hackers, a group calling itself “Turkish hacker Cyber Islam,” referenced Hamas, Trump and Netanyahu in the messages.

V. **ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT**

1. **Fuel Bill for Global Airline Industry.**

The global average jet fuel price for week ending October 24 was \$92.22 per barrel, up 1.7% on prior month's average, and down 6.9% on prior year's average, according to the Jet Fuel Price Monitor, a joint IATA-Platts initiative.

2. **United, Neste To Bring SAF to Three Major U.S. Airports.**

United Airlines and Neste expanded their existing partnership to supply sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) to Houston Bush, Newark Liberty and Washington Dulles airports. Neste MY Sustainable Aviation Fuel™ will be blended with conventional jet fuel before use to meet jet fuel specifications. Neste has been supplying SAF to United at Chicago O'Hare since August 2024, after the SAF purchase credit was enacted in Illinois. United is also using it at San Francisco International, where California's Low Carbon Fuel Standard (LCFS) supports use of renewable fuels.

3. **ICAO Assembly Accelerates Transition to "Decarbonized Future."**

The ICAO General Assembly in Montreal "accelerated aviation's transition to a more sustainable and decarbonized future by achieving broader global cooperation, strengthening the international framework, and laying the groundwork for increased investment." States endorsed cleaner energy sources, with a collective target of 5% CO2 reduction by 2030 and the policy, regulation, support and financing pathway for achieving it. Full operation of the ICAO Finvest Hub will connect decarbonization projects with public and private investors, addressing financing challenges, particularly in developing countries. The commitment to the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) was reaffirmed. Work on aircraft noise, local air quality, single-use plastics and non-CO2 climate effects is advancing. States acknowledged the urgent need for stronger scientific input, strengthened international cooperation, and updated guidance on climate risk assessment and infrastructure resilience to adapt aviation infrastructure and operations to climate-related impacts. The number of states submitting Action Plans on CO2 Emissions Reduction Activities increased to 154, compared to 133 in 2022; voluntary participation in CORSIA is now 130 states.

VI. U.S. CONGRESS

1. ROTOR Act Requires ADS-B In Technology in All Aircraft.

The Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation advanced the Rotorcraft Operations Transparency and Oversight Reform (ROTOR) Act, after unanimously approving an amendment that “requires all aircraft to be equipped with ADS-B In technology by 2031, closes a loophole that allowed military aircraft to operate without ADS-B Out transmitting their location, strengthens FAA-Department of Defense (DOD) coordination and requires comprehensive safety reviews of all aircraft operations in the DCA airspace, as well as all major and mid-sized U.S. airports.” The legislation addresses issues identified by the National Transportation Safety Board’s (NTSB) ongoing investigation into the mid-air collision near Reagan Washington National Airport that killed 67 people on January 29. Reports of over 15,000 near-misses between commercial aircraft and helicopters in the National Capital Region went unaddressed in the three years before the crash. The legislation tasks FAA with providing an Airborne Collision Avoidance System-X (ACAS-X) Action Plan, establishes an FAA Office of FAA-DOD Coordination, and directs the Inspector General of the Army “to conduct an audit of the Army’s coordination with the FAA, pilot training and qualification standards, and the Army’s use of ADS-B Out and whether it adheres to Army policy, regulation, and law.”

2. Bills Would Ensure Pay for Federal Workers During Gov’t Shutdown.

Numerous bills were introduced to ensure that federal workers are paid during the government shutdown. . . . Senate Republicans introduced the “Keep America Flying Act of 2026,” and the “Shutdown Fairness Act.” The “True Shutdown Fairness Act,” was sponsored by Senate Democrats. . . . The House was out of session in October, but bills introduced include the “No Taxation Without Operation Act”; the “Pay Our Homeland Defenders Act of 2026”; the “Keep Air Travel Safe Act”; and the “Aviation Funding Stability Act.”

3. Senate Hearing Examines “Competition in America’s Skies.”

The Senate Subcommittee on Competition Policy held a hearing to examine airline competition. Among witnesses, Airlines for America Senior Vice President Sharon Pinkerton said today’s consumers “are benefitting from fierce competition between airlines . . . from 2019 to 2024, overall consumer prices, as measured by the U.S. Consumer Price Index, rose 23%; in striking contrast, the CPI’s airline fares component fell 1.5%.” . . . Frontier CEO Barry Biffle said at fortress hubs, airports where a single airline controls 60, 70,

sometimes even 80% of the gates, customers pay higher fares and have fewer choices. “This Subcommittee has an opportunity to fix this,” said Biffle. “All we need is an opportunity to compete. Give us a gate, and we will bring fares down. Give us a slot, and we will create new routes,” said Biffle. “The big airlines have had decades to consolidate, merge, and dominate. It is time to level the playing field.” . . . Allegiant CEO Greg Anderson also called for improved gate and slot access for “value airlines.” Legislation like the bipartisan “Airport Gate Competition Act,” introduced last year, would require any application for a federally funded terminal project at large hub airports to designate no less than 33% of gates and other spaces as common use. He called for international market access for value airlines. “In partnership with Viva in Mexico, we filed for a first-of-its-kind value airline alliance. Together, we proposed to open 92 new nonstop routes between the U.S. and Mexico, particularly from underserved cities,” said Anderson. “This alliance would give nearly 5 million more Americans access to affordable international travel . . . increase the total number of direct U.S.-Mexico routes by 50% [and] introduce the kind of low-fare competition desperately needed in that market.”

VII. **BILATERAL AND STATE DEPARTMENT NEWS**

1. **Asian Airlines Reach Trade Agreements With U.S.**

Vietnam Airlines agreed to purchase 50 aircraft from Boeing, valued at over \$8 billion, and Air Cambodia committed “to working jointly with Boeing in support of Cambodia’s aviation ecosystem development and Air Cambodia’s growth,” during U.S. trade talks in Asia. Korean Air will purchase 103 new Boeing aircraft valued at \$36.2 billion and GE engines valued at \$13.7 billion. Malaysia agreed to purchase 30 Boeing aircraft with option for 30 additional.

2. **U.S. To Support \$10 Billion Ethiopian Airport Project.**

U.S. Senior Advisor for Africa, Massad Boulos, announced support for construction of Bishoftu International near Addis Ababa, set to be Africa’s largest airport by 2029. The project is the Trump Administration’s first major business initiative in the Horn of Africa, said Boulos. In August, the African Development Bank agreed to be “the initial mandated lead arranger, global coordinator and book runner to mobilize nearly \$8 billion of the \$10 billion needed for the mega project.” The airport will be built in phases, with Phase I expected to be completed by November 2029. While the existing Bole International currently can handle around 19 million passengers annually, the new airport will have capacity for up to 60 million at completion of phase one and up to 100 million with second phase. Cargo facilities will be able to handle up to 3.73 million tonnes annually. Bishoftu will serve international passenger and cargo traffic; Bole will handle Ethiopian Airline’s domestic operations.

3. **DOT Proposes Ban on Russian Overflights by Chinese Carriers.**

DOT tentatively proposed to prohibit certain Chinese air carriers from utilizing Russian airspace in their passenger or combination services between China and the United States. The carriers are Air China, Beijing Capital, China Eastern, China Southern, Hainan, Sichuan and Xiamen. In 2022, Russia closed its airspace to U.S. air carriers in response to sanctions imposed for Russia's invasion of Ukraine. “By comparison, Chinese air carriers face no prohibition on the use of Russian airspace,” said DOT. “The Department is taking steps by this action to level this competitive disparity amongst U.S. and Chinese air carriers.” Air China, China Southern and China Eastern filed comments opposing the DOT proposed order, noting the impact on thousands of passengers holding tickets for travel in November and December and extended flight times caused by the detour, and requested a minimum 60-day grace period to allow for rebooking and minimal operational disruption. United Airlines asked DOT to extend the proposed order to include Hong Kong-based

carriers, in particular Cathay Pacific. Air France-KLM CEO Benjamin Smith and Lufthansa Group CEO Carsten Spohr, in a joint interview, supported the DOT proposal, noting that European Union airlines avoid Russian airspace, putting them at a competitive disadvantage with foreign airlines flying to the EU via Russia.

VIII. EUROPE AND AFRICA

1. Air France Offers Paris to Las Vegas Nonstops.

Air France will offer three weekly Airbus A350-900 nonstops between Paris Charles de Gaulle and Las Vegas from April 15, for the 2026 summer season. Las Vegas is also served year-round by partner KLM, with up to seven weekly flights from Amsterdam Schiphol. For winter 2025-2026, the connection between Paris and Orlando will be extended to five A350-900 flights per week. Paris to Raleigh-Durham, Cancún and Papeete (via Los Angeles) will operate up to seven times per week, compared to five previously. The Air France La Première suite is now available on selected flights from Paris to New York Kennedy and Los Angeles, and to Miami from December. Los Angeles La Première customers have a dedicated check-in area and options for priority baggage handling and security checks, and a private car transfer to the tarmac. Air France is rolling out very high-speed Wi-Fi across the fleet, including regional aircraft, free of charge, “the first major European airline to offer this service on board.”

2. Iberia Begins Orlando Service.

Iberia launched four weekly Airbus A330 Madrid to Orlando nonstops for the winter season.

3. Shai Weiss to Leave Virgin Atlantic.

Corneel Koster will succeed Shai Weiss as CEO of Virgin Atlantic on January 1, 2026. Koster has held senior roles at Virgin Atlantic and partners Delta, Aeroméxico and KLM.

4. Icelandic Airline Play Ceases Operations.

Icelandic airline Play canceled all flights and said it would “work closely with authorities and employees to implement necessary measures to wind down operations.” The company cited poor ticket sales and “deep-rooted challenges that have built up over time.”

5. oneworld CEO Nathaniel Pieper Moves to American Airlines.

See Section X, item 1.

IX. ASIA/PACIFIC AND MIDDLE EAST

1. Hawaiian Resumes Seasonal Service to Auckland.

Hawaiian Airlines resumes seasonal service between Honolulu and Auckland on November 16 with three-times weekly Airbus A330 flights.

2. Korean Air Acquires Stake in WestJet Parent Companies.

Korean Air acquired an 11.02% stake in WestJet parent companies, Kestrel Topco and Kestrel Holdings, through an investment of USD 217 million. This investment represents a 10% equity stake in WestJet, Canada's second-largest airline. Delta and Air France-KLM also invested in WestJet's parent companies. Walter Cho, Chairman and CEO of Hanjin Group and Korean Air, was appointed to WestJet's Board; other members are Benjamin Smith, CEO of Air France-KLM, and Alex Cruz, former Chairman and CEO of British Airways. The investment "underscores the growing importance of the Canadian aviation market, which was valued at USD 33 billion in 2024 and ranked among the world's top ten, with double-digit growth since 2019," said Korean Air, which is merging with Asiana Airlines and "will continue to pursue diverse strategic partnerships across the global aviation market."

3. Delta Plans Nonstops to Riyadh.

Delta will inaugurate service between Atlanta and Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in October 2026, with three weekly Airbus A350-900 flights. In July, Delta signed a strategic agreement with startup Riyadh Air under which it will serve as the Saudi airline's exclusive partner in North America, while Riyadh Air will be Delta's exclusive partner in Riyadh and beyond. The agreement "envisions a long-term relationship, subject to regulatory approvals, that includes interline and codeshare connectivity," said Riyadh Air CEO Tony Douglas. . . . Other new Delta destinations are Marrakech (October 2025), Melbourne (December 2025), Sardinia (May 2026), Porto (May 2026), Hong Kong (June 2026) and Malta (June 2026).

4. American Airlines Will Resume Flying to Israel in March.

American Airlines will resume service to Israel on March 28, with daily nonstops from New York Kennedy. Flights were suspended after the October 7, 2023 terrorist attack in Israel, which led to a two-year war with Hamas in Gaza. Delta, United, El Al and Arkia also operate flights between Israel and the U.S.; United flies twice daily to Newark and is adding flights from Chicago and Washington Dulles. Other airlines resuming service to Israel include British Airways, Iberia, SAS, Eurowings and Air Europa. Israeli authorities said

some 60 foreign carriers are now flying to Tel Aviv compared to 80 before the war. . . . In other news, EL AL and JetBlue notified DOT that their code share agreement would cease on October 26, 2025. Their interline agreement will remain active.

5. Emirates Centre of Hospitality Excellence Opens.

The Emirates Centre of Hospitality Excellence has opened in Dubai, “to provide a luxurious training experience to almost 25,000 cabin crew,” focused on the airline’s “four pillars of hospitality in the sky—excellence, attentiveness, innovation and passion.” The \$8 million learning zone and program includes a restaurant and lounge for up to 170 guests, presentation kitchens and eight tech-enabled classrooms. Emirates also operates a Crew Zone that provides educational workshops, tech zones, staff support, a beauty and wellbeing hub, and an interactive lounge area to assist cabin crew, in addition to initial and ongoing basic crew training. Emirates is actively recruiting cabin crew from around the world.

6. Qatar Adds U.S. Routes via Aer Lingus, LEVEL.

Qatar Airways is offering 18 additional U.S. routes through expanded code shares with International Airlines Group (IAG) partners, Aer Lingus and LEVEL. Qatar and Aer Lingus code share on flights from Dublin to Boston, Bradley International in Connecticut, Cleveland, Indianapolis, Minneapolis, Nashville, Newark, Orlando, Philadelphia, Washington Dulles, with Las Vegas to come. Qatar resumed its code share agreement with LEVEL for flights from Barcelona El Prat to Boston, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, San Francisco, Buenos Aires, and Santiago ahead. . . . QFZ and Qatar Airways agreed to establish an “aviation cluster” in the Ras Bufontas Free Zone to support maintenance and expansion of the carrier’s fleet.

7. Gulf Air Relaunches Direct Flights to New York.

Gulf Air relaunched direct service to New York Kennedy, operating three weekly flights from Manama, the capital of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

8. oneworld CEO Nathaniel Pieper Moves to American Airlines.

See Section X, item 1.

X. AMERICAS

1. oneworld CEO Nathaniel Pieper Moves to American Airlines.

Nathaniel Pieper was named Chief Commercial Officer of American Airlines, effective November 3. He recently served as oneworld CEO and has held leadership positions at Alaska, Delta and Northwest. Pieper will report to CEO Robert Isom and co-lead the Customer Experience team with Chief Operating Officer David Seymour.

2. United-BMW Tarmac Transfers Surpass 14,000 Since May Launch.

United and BMW of North America have completed 14,000 luxury tarmac transfers since the program launched in May. Available to select loyalty members, the service offers chauffeured rides between connecting flights in 10 BMW vehicles across United hubs in Chicago, Denver, Houston, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Washington, D.C. Upon arrival, passengers are met at the gate and escorted to an electric BMW sedan or SUV. Other U.S. carriers that offer luxury tarmac services are Delta (Porsche) and American (Cadillac).

3. JetBlue-United “Blue Sky” Benefits Roll Out.

JetBlue and United loyalty members can now earn and redeem points or miles across each other’s networks. Other benefits of their “Blue Sky” collaboration are rolling out in phases from early 2026, such as priority boarding, preferred and extra legroom seating, and same-day standby and flight changes.

4. Alaska, Hawaiian Receive Single Operating Certificate.

Alaska Airlines received a single operating certificate from FAA to operate the combined Alaska/Hawaiian Airlines as two separate brands, following integration of training, policies, procedures and manuals across both airlines. This paves the way for combining scheduling and passenger service systems and integrating flight crew, airport and maintenance teams under joint collective bargaining agreements.

5. Southwest Demonstrates New Cabin Design.

Southwest received its first Boeing MAX 8 with updated cabin that includes new seats with extra legroom and larger overhead bins; the new design is expected to begin operating with assigned and premium seating in January. . . . Southwest plans to begin service to Anchorage in first half 2026, as it expands its network to 122 airports. . . . Southwest signed an interline agreement with Hahnair; the German distributor connects 350 airlines with

100,000 travel agencies in 190 markets. The partnership allows for sale of Southwest tickets “in geographies where we don’t fly today, in local currencies.”

6. Spirit Considers Merger or Sale of Company.

Spirit is pursuing merger discussions with potential partners, as it navigates its second bankruptcy filing in less than a year. The company received court approval for a multi-tranche debtor-in-possession financing facility of up to \$475 million from its existing bondholders. Spirit also received court approval for an agreement with AerCap Ireland, its largest aircraft lessor, which includes a \$150 million payment from AerCap to Spirit, rejection of 27 aircraft leases and resolution of all claims and disputes between the parties. The agreement allows the airline to reduce operating costs by hundreds of millions of dollars and provides for future delivery of 30 aircraft. Spirit said it “continues to make progress with other lessors as it pursues its fleet optimization strategy.” Spirit's motion to reject 12 airport leases and 19 ground handling agreements was also approved.

7. Abra Plans Initial Public Offering.

UK-based Abra Group is planning an initial public offering of ordinary shares in the U.S., subject to market conditions, other considerations, and completion of the SEC's review process. Abra is the holding company for Avianca and GOL, and also has a strategic investment in Wamos Air, which offers Airbus A330 Aircraft, Crew, Maintenance and Insurance (ACMI) operations. CEO is Adrian Neuhauser. . . . Abra signed agreements for up to seven A330neo aircraft to be “operated by the Group’s airlines according to market-driven operational and financial opportunities at the time of their integration.” Abra has exercised 50 options for A320neo aircraft, bringing the total to 138 units to be delivered by 2032. The Group is scheduled to receive the first of these later this year. Abra currently has orders for 96 Boeing 737 MAX aircraft, scheduled for delivery until 2030, and an order for five A350-900 aircraft, which will be added in coming years.

8. Magnifica Air.

Air Lease announced long-term agreements with Florida-based startup Magnifica Air for four new Airbus A220-300s and two new A321-200neos, to be delivered for a 2027 launch. Each aircraft will carry 45-54 passengers, with two to four private suites. Magnifica Air CEO Wade Black, describing “a hybrid solution between first-class and private jet travel, delivered with the consistency and scale of commercial,” said: “Guests will arrive just 30 minutes before departure to private terminals, with white-glove baggage handling and TSA-approved security screening inside the lounge. World class dining,

wellness offerings, and cocktails set the tone pre-flight, before guests are escorted directly to their aircraft via sprinter van or private ramp walk. . . . On arrival, baggage is delivered within 10–15 minutes, chauffeurs are waiting curbside, and guests may refresh in lounges before onward journeys. Post-flight, members receive personalized concierge check-ins and invitations to partner events.” Six to seven daily departures will connect to Miami, New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco Bay Area, Dallas and Houston, with seasonal routes to Napa Valley and the Caribbean. Magnifica Air also will offer VIP charters and curated “experience trips” The airline has backing from CIG Companies.

9. **DOT Cancels 13 Mexican Carrier Routes to U.S.**
See Section I, item 4.
10. **Air France Offers Paris to Las Vegas Nonstops.**
See Section VIII, item 1.
11. **Iberia Begins Orlando Service.**
See Section VIII, item 2.
12. **Hawaiian Resumes Seasonal Service to Auckland.**
See Section IX, item 1.
13. **Korean Air Acquires Stake in WestJet Parent Companies.**
See Section IX, item 2.
14. **Delta Plans Nonstops to Riyadh.**
See Section IX, item 3.
15. **American Airlines Will Resume Flying to Israel in March.**
See Section IX, item 4.
16. **Qatar Adds U.S. Routes via Aer Lingus, LEVEL.**
See Section IX, item 6.
17. **Gulf Air Relaunches Direct Flights to New York.**
See Section IX, item 7.