



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. **DOT Withdraws Proposed Passenger Compensation Rule.**

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) rescinded a proposed rule that required carriers to compensate passengers \$200 to \$775 for disrupted travel caused by circumstances DOT purported to be within the airline's control and provide free meals, lodging and rebooking.

2. **FTC Calls for Deletion, Revision of “Anticompetitive” Regulations.**

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) submitted recommendations for deleting or revising certain regulations to the Office of Management and Budget, in response to an Executive Order to find “unnecessary regulations that exclude new market entrants, protect dominant incumbents, and predetermine economic winners and losers, as a first step to repealing them.” Included are DOT regulations that give contracting preferences for aviation projects and airport concessions “to businesses owned by ‘socially and economically disadvantaged individuals,’ and presume that women and members of certain racial groups are ‘disadvantaged.’ Conferring these preferences to firms having nothing to do with price or quality may drive up costs or reduce quality,” said FTC. DOT asked a court “to hold that these race- and sex-based presumptions are unconstitutional and is conducting a rulemaking to bring the programs into line with the law and Constitution.”

3. **DOT Orders Delta, Aeromexico to Dissolve Joint Venture.**

DOT terminated approval of the Delta/Aeromexico joint venture and withdrew antitrust immunity, stating that Mexico’s refusal to remedy noncompliance with the U.S.-Mexico Air Transport Agreement is anti-competitive, disadvantages U.S. carriers and requires immediate corrective action. In 2022, Mexico “abruptly rescinded slots and then forced U.S. all-cargo carriers to relocate operations. Mexico claimed it was to allow for construction to alleviate congestion at Benito Juarez International Airport that has yet to materialize three years later.” The joint venture must wind down by January 1, 2026, with activities such as common pricing, capacity management and revenue sharing that require antitrust immunity discontinued. Delta and Aeromexico can continue their partnership through “arms-length activities,” such as code sharing, marketing and frequent flyer cooperation. Delta may retain its equity stake in Aeromexico and both carriers can maintain existing flying in the U.S.-Mexico market unimpeded. Delta said it is reviewing the order and considering next steps, adding, “All flights will continue to operate as normal.”

4. FAA Proposes \$3.1 Million in Fines Against Boeing.

The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) proposed fines totaling \$3.1 million against Boeing for safety violations that occurred from September 2023 through February 2024, including actions related to the January 2024 Alaska Airlines door plug incident and interference with safety officials' independence. FAA identified hundreds of quality system violations at Boeing's 737 factory in Renton, Washington, and subcontractor Spirit AeroSystems' 737 factory in Wichita, Kansas. Additionally, Boeing presented two unairworthy aircraft to the FAA for airworthiness certificates and failed to follow its quality system. FAA also found that "a non-ODA Boeing employee pressured a Boeing ODA unit member to sign off on a 737-MAX to meet a delivery schedule, even though the ODA member determined the aircraft did not comply with applicable standards." [ODA (Organization Designation Authorization) is a framework by which limited airworthiness functions are delegated to organizations.] . . . Boeing and the Justice Department asked a Texas federal judge to exclude FAA's proposed \$3.1 million fine from a criminal conspiracy case relating to the fatal 737 MAX 8 crashes in 2018 and 2019, as it is unrelated. . . . FAA has allowed limited delegation to Boeing for issuing airworthiness certificates for some 737 MAX and 787 airplanes, alternating weekly with the manufacturer.

5. FAA Seeks Prime Integrator for New ATC System.

FAA launched a process to identify a Prime Integrator to manage the building of a new air traffic control (ATC) system. Proposals to a Request for Solutions were due by September 21. The goal is to implement a new system within three to four years, replacing core infrastructure including radar, software, hardware and telecommunications networks. . . . FAA issued a "vendor challenge" for an industry leader to develop a new Flow Management Data and Services (FMDS) system that will replace the existing Traffic Flow Management System (TFMS) used by controllers to plan and implement traffic flow programs that minimize delays and congestion. . . . In other ATC news, FAA "hit its air traffic controller hiring goals for Fiscal Year 2025 by bringing in 2,026 new controllers." And, Embry-Riddle's Prescott, Arizona, campus is the ninth school to participate in FAA's Enhanced Air Traffic Collegiate Training Initiative (AT-CTI) program, which provides the same curriculum and advanced technology as that offered at FAA's Air Traffic Controller Academy in Oklahoma City.

6. Passenger Noncompliance in Emergency Evacuations Addressed.

FAA urged airlines to revise safety messaging for emergency evacuations, emphasizing the critical importance of strict passenger compliance with crewmember instructions. The alert makes numerous recommendations, including using Safety Management Systems to evaluate evacuation

procedures and identify potential hazards. Passenger attempts to retrieve carry-on items during evacuations are a contributing factor in delayed evacuations, increased injury rates and compromised survivability during time-critical emergencies involving smoke, fire or structural damage.

7. FAA Issues RFI for New Runway Lighting System.

FAA issued a Request for Information on a new cost-effective runway lighting system to deploy at U.S. airports within the next two to three years. Runway Status Lights automatically signal pilots and vehicle operators when it is unsafe to enter, cross, or begin takeoff without the need for input from controllers. Existing systems, embedded in the pavement of runways and taxiways at 20 airports, are expensive to install and require closing runways during construction.

8. FAA Plan to Fast-Track Advanced Air Mobility Vehicles.

FAA introduced a program to accelerate deployment of advanced air mobility (AAM) vehicles. The Electric Vertical Takeoff and Landing Integration Pilot Program (eIPP) will form public-private partnerships with State and local government entities and private sector companies to develop new frameworks and regulations for enabling safe operations. The eIPP will include at least five pilot projects and will run for three years after the first project becomes operational. Envisioned operations include piloted and unmanned approaches to short-range air taxis; longer-range, fixed-wing flights; cargo; logistics and supply serving emergency management, medical transport or off-shore energy facilities; and increased automation safety.

9. FAA Issues Safety Alert for Lithium Batteries.

FAA issued a Safety Alert for Operators (SAFO) on the risk of uncontrollable fires associated with lithium batteries in aircraft passenger compartments. “Managing the Risks of Lithium Batteries Carried by Passengers and Crewmembers” emphasizes the importance of identifying potential hazards and implementing risk mitigation strategies. Because lithium batteries stored in overhead bins and/or in carry-on baggage may be obscured, difficult to access, or not readily monitored by passengers or crewmembers, detection of thermal runaway and firefighting measures may be delayed in flight, increasing the risk to safety. FAA data underscores the critical need for operators to adhere to their safety risk management processes.

10. ICAO Convenes 42nd Assembly.

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) 42nd Assembly gathered more than 3,000 registered delegates in Montreal (September 23–October 3). “A system currently built to serve 4.6 billion passengers will not accommodate

three times that number, unless we ensure its transformation,” said Council President Salvatore Sciacchitano, in his opening address. He highlighted challenges around infrastructure gaps in developing nations, warning if they are not addressed, “growth will end up deepening differences, instead of reducing them,” and urged delegates “to give ICAO a clear mandate to intervene decisively.”

ICAO accepted 14 working papers authored by the International Air Transport Association (IATA), which call for, among other things, stronger support for sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) production and CORSIA (Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation), “as key enablers of aviation’s commitment to achieve net zero emissions by 2050.” IATA also called for avoidance of patchworks of debilitating tax measures and passenger rights regulations, timely accident reports, mitigations for Global Navigation Satellite System interference, and preservation of critical radio-frequency spectrum. On the contentious debate about commercial pilot retirement age, IATA supports “lifting the multi pilot age limit to 67, retaining the existing cockpit safeguard of at least one pilot under 65 and pairing the change with stronger, standardized medical oversight.” In the U.S., Senator Ted Cruz asked President Trump “to push to raise the mandatory commercial pilot retirement age” from 65 to 67 years old, saying “current policy is arbitrarily forcing the most experienced and qualified pilots into early retirement [and] limits the number of available pilots.” Air Line Pilots Association objects, saying the United States “is the global leader in aviation safety, and we should resist any attempts to arbitrarily make changes to the regulatory framework that has helped us achieve this record. That’s why Congress rejected making a change to the pilot retirement age just last year. The U.S. should continue to provide global leadership on this issue and maintain its current position.”

II. AIRPORTS

1. OAG: 10 Years of Megahub Rankings.

OAG's new ranking of top 10 global megahubs compares 2025 and 2015 positions, showing a "shifting balance of power across the global aviation industry." While London Heathrow retained its number one position this year, as it ranked in 2015, Istanbul moved into second place from fourth, Kuala Lumpur moved to fourth from fifth, and Incheon moved to sixth from tenth. Amsterdam moved from seventh to third most connected hub globally. Paris is now in tenth place, from sixth a decade ago, and Frankfurt is down from third to fourth; their positions dropped in part because of reductions in domestic connectivity and a shift to alternate modes of transport. Among U.S. airports in the top 10, Atlanta held its eighth place position, and Chicago O'Hare slipped from second place in 2015 to seventh in 2025.

2. San Diego Opens New \$3.8 Billion Terminal 1.

San Diego International's new Terminal 1 has opened, with 19 gates, 17 new concessions, 13 security lanes, and seven baggage carousels. The \$3.8 billion project also includes new access roadways, a ground transportation plaza, and enhanced pedestrian walkways. A second phase, scheduled for completion in early 2028, will add 11 additional gates. The old Terminal 1, which opened in 1967, will be demolished.

3. FAA Extends Order Limiting Newark Liberty Operations.

FAA is extending the limited rate of arrivals and departures at Newark Liberty to October 24, 2026. The order also increases the hourly flight limit from 68 to 72 operations. Weekend construction closures of Runway 4L-22R have resumed and will continue through end of year.

4. Austin-Bergstrom Airline Negotiations Authorized.

Austin City Council authorized the negotiation and execution of Signatory Airline Use and Lease Agreements with commercial passenger and cargo carriers at Austin-Bergstrom. As part of agreements under consideration, airlines are committing to development of the Airport Expansion and Development Program and leasing the 20+ new gates expected by early 2030s, said airport CEO Ghizlane Badawi. Future total gate count and allocation of gates, as well as total cost of the development program, will be finalized and shared with the public in early 2026; airlines agreements are planned to go into effect on January 1, 2026.

5. Runway Closures at Boston Logan.

Two 75-day closures of a Boston Logan runway could cause delays, especially if there are weather or other diversions, said Massachusetts Port Authority (Massport). Installation of an Engineered Material Arresting System (EMAS) at the end of Runway 27 began on September 2. The second closure will begin after July 1, 2026. EMAS is a vital safety system at airports located near water or ground elevation changes. It is made of lightweight collapsible material designed to stop a plane that has overshot the runway. Boston Logan has two other EMAS systems in use, one at the end of Runway 22R and the other at the end of Runway 33L. A deck for the EMAS will be constructed partially in the water; the project does not extend the runway or change its operational capacity.

6. Santiago de Chile Completes Domestic Terminal Expansion.

Santiago de Chile completed the final phase of its \$60 million domestic terminal (T1) expansion and refurbishment project, which increased number of boarding gates from 22 to 38 and provides a direct connection to Terminal 2. A new international terminal opened in 2022. The airport is operated by Groupe ADP and Vinci.

7. Gatwick Gets Government Approval For Second Runway.

The UK approved a second runway for Gatwick, with intent to support dual runway operations through routine use of the existing northern runway and to handle up to 80 million passengers annually. The development will include amendments to taxiways, terminal extensions and ancillary facilities, highways and rivers; and temporary construction works, mitigation works and other associated development. “This is another important gateway in the planning process for this £2.2 billion investment,” said Stewart Wingate, Managing Director of UK VINCI Airports, which operates Gatwick. “It is essential that any planning conditions enable us to realize the full benefits of the project and do not impose unnecessary constraints that make it uneconomic to invest in. We now need to carefully examine the details of the planning consent. Once we have done that, we will be able to comment further.”

8. Sydney Master Plan Forecasts 72 Million Passengers a Year by 2045.

Sydney Airport released its preliminary draft Master Plan 2045, which includes a proposed expansion linking T2 and T3 domestic terminals and adding up to 12 new international gates and two additional gates at the T1 International Terminal. The plan forecasts 72 million passengers a year by 2045, an increase of 75% from today. International passenger numbers are forecast to grow to 36.4 million; domestic and regional to 36.2 million; and airfreight volumes to 1.4 million tonnes. Public consultation is underway, said CEO Scott

Charlton. “All comments received will be carefully considered and, where appropriate, the plan will be revised before being submitted to the Australian Government’s Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government for consideration.”

9. Guangzhou Baiyun Hosts ACI World Airport Experience Summit.

“Reimagining a People Experience” was the theme of the 2025 Airports Council International (ACI) World Airport Experience Summit, highlighting “how airports are embracing AI, biometrics, immersive technologies, and human-centered design to deliver seamless, inclusive, and memorable journeys, while fostering engaging workplaces for employees.” Guangzhou Baiyun hosted the event. Baiyun ranked tenth in the world for aircraft movements in 2024 and ninth for cargo throughput, and with the upcoming opening of Terminal 3 “will expand into a megahub with three terminals and five runways.” Total number of passengers at Chinese airports is projected to exceed three billion by 2042, more than double the 2024 figure. Istanbul Airport will host the 2026 ACI World Airport Experience Summit. Istanbul opened in 2019 and handled over 80 million passengers in 2024.

III. **SECURITY AND DATA PRIVACY**

1. **TSA Screens Record 10.4 Million on Labor Day Weekend.**

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) screened nearly 10.4 million travelers at U.S. airport checkpoints from Friday through Monday of the Labor Day holiday weekend, with Friday, August 29, marking one of the busiest days in TSA history.

2. **Hungary's Visa Waiver Program Status Restored.**

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) restored Hungary's status in the Visa Waiver Program (VWP), saying the government has taken action requested by the U.S. to address security vulnerabilities. Hungarian citizens now may travel under the VWP and use the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA). . . . Separately, DHS increased the ESTA fee from \$21 to \$40, effective September 30. U.S. Travel Association objected, saying, "raising fees on lawful international visitors amounts to a self-imposed tariff on one of our nation's largest exports: international travel spending," and urging Congress to lower visitor fees in FY26 appropriations.

3. **Cyberattack Causes Delays at European Airports.**

A cyber-related disruption at several European airports, including Berlin-Brandenburg, Brussels and Heathrow, was attributed to a ransomware attack on Collins Aerospace, which provides check-in software for several airlines across multiple airports globally. An arrest was made by the UK National Crime Agency.

4. **Political Unrest Affects Travel Decisions.**

According to the Global Rescue Summer 2025 Traveler Safety and Sentiment Survey, concerns about protests, civil unrest and political tensions in the United States are influencing travel decisions for international travelers. While only 1% of U.S.-based respondents canceled travel within the U.S. due to unrest, nearly 12% of non-U.S. respondents canceled travel to or within the U.S. More than 2,900 people were surveyed June 24-30, 2025, said Global Rescue, a provider of medical, security, evacuation and travel risk management services.

IV. TECHNOLOGY AND EQUIPMENT

1. Amadeus, Lufthansa Test EU Digital Identity Wallet.

Amadeus and Lufthansa, participating partners in the EU Digital Identity Wallet (EUDI Wallet) Consortium Large Scale pilot project, successfully tested the wallet for online check-in and in-person travel scenarios at the airport like check-in, bag-drop and boarding. Similar to services like Apple Pay and Google Pay, the EUDI Wallet will allow consumers to pay online or in person with a single click or tap. Available in 2026, EUDI Wallet will be provided by Member States to securely store identity documents like passports and national ID cards, as well as payment methods and biometric profiles.

2. Groups Ask DOD, DOT to Address GPS Jamming/Spoofing.

Aviation and other industry groups asked the Departments of Defense and Transportation, in a letter, to address GPS signal jamming and spoofing, which have affected some flights from the United States in international airspace. Overall, approximately 700 jamming/spoofing events occurred daily in 2024.

3. Delta, SkyWest Partner with Maeve on Hybrid Regional Aircraft.

Delta is partnering with Maeve Aerospace to advance development of a hybrid electric aircraft for regional flights. The MAEVE Jet is designed to reduce fuel consumption and emissions by up to 40% using conventional jet fuel, with further lifecycle emissions reductions possible when using SAF. . . . SkyWest signed a strategic agreement as an equity investor in Maeve and will have exclusive launch customer rights. SkyWest “will lend Maeve its extensive operations, performance, and design expertise through the development phase. The partnership also enhances SkyWest’s long-term fleet replacement strategy.” SkyWest Airlines operates through partnerships with United, Delta, American and Alaska Airlines, carrying 42 million passengers in 2024 with a fleet of nearly 500 aircraft.

V. ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

1. Fuel Bill for Global Airline Industry.

The global average jet fuel price for week ending September 5 was \$89.42 per barrel, up 2% on prior month's average, and down 9.7% on prior year's average, according to the Jet Fuel Price Monitor, a joint IATA-Platts initiative.

2. First Commercial-Scale SAF Uplift at Portland International.

Delta, in collaboration with Shell and Portland International, took delivery of SAF into the airport's fuel system, marking the first commercial-scale SAF uplift there. The batch of 400,000 gallons of blended SAF was produced by Montana Renewables from waste-derived feedstock. Shell then supplied it to Zenith Terminal in Portland where it was blended with traditional jet fuel to meet regulatory requirements and delivered to the airport via barge, truck and pipeline. "We're looking forward to working with our partners to make sure State and local policies support development of the infrastructure and market needed to bring SAF here on a larger scale," said Port of Portland Chief Aviation Officer Dan Pippenger.

3. USA BioEnergy Secures JM, Honeywell Tech for SAF Facility.

USA BioEnergy selected Johnson Matthey and Honeywell to provide technologies to produce synthetic paraffinic kerosene at its Bon Wier, Texas biorefinery. SAF produced from abundantly available forest thinnings addresses feedstock availability challenges. Once operational, the Bon Wier plant is expected to convert one million tons of biomass annually into 65 million gallons of transportation fuels, including SAF.

4. ICAO Launches Finvest Global Investment Portal.

ICAO and International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) have partnered to facilitate financial resources through the ICAO Finvest@ETAF portal for scaling up SAF and other cleaner energy solutions. The portal "is a first-of-its-kind gateway between project developers and financiers," said ICAO Secretary General Juan Carlos Salazar. "This matchmaking function, using ICAO's sustainability criteria, helps de-risk investments while ensuring environmental integrity."

5. oneworld Fund To Advance, Commercialize SAF Technologies.

oneworld and member airlines, in partnership with Breakthrough Energy Ventures (BEV), launched an investment fund designed to address limited availability and high cost of SAF. The fund, led by cornerstone investors

Alaska Airlines and American Airlines, seeks to accelerate global development of long-term aviation fuel solutions that are cost-effective, scalable and have lower emissions than conventional fuels. BEV, a capital fund founded by Bill Gates, will serve as investment manager. The fund is also supported by oneworld members International Airlines Group (IAG), Cathay Pacific and Japan Airlines. Non-alliance investors include Singapore Airlines.

6. EU Funds New Clean Aviation Initiatives.

The European Union's Clean Aviation Joint Undertaking launched €945 million to support 12 projects including ultra-efficient short- to medium-range and regional aircraft technologies, fast track areas (FTAs) and aircraft concept integration and impact assessment. New cooperation in regional aviation between the EU and Canada, PHARES (Powerplant Hybrid Application for Regional Segment), will be coordinated by a Canadian aircraft engine manufacturer. Projects start in 2026; first flight tests planned for 2028-2029. The public-private partnership has a budget of €4.1 billion. Its "disruptive clean aviation technologies will help reduce the emission footprint of short-medium range and regional aircraft by no less than 30% compared to 2020 state-of-the-art aircraft."

VI. U.S. CONGRESS

1. House Democrats Want Passenger Compensation Rule Reinstated.

House Democrats sent a letter to DOT Secretary Sean Duffy, urging the Administration to reverse its decision to rescind the proposed rule that would have required airlines to compensate and cover expenses for passengers experiencing lengthy delays or cancellations caused by air carriers. Currently, several major U.S. carriers have committed to rebook passengers at no additional cost, cover meals during airline-caused disruptions, and provide overnight lodging. However, these commitments are at the airline's discretion, whereas a rule keeps standards in place for all airline passengers. These protections, as a rule, are also less likely to change with little notice. "Instead of rolling back this protection for passengers, the Trump administration should be focusing on commonsense, bipartisan ways to reduce costs for customers and keep our skies safe," said the letter, which was signed by 77 House Democrats.

2. Blumenthal Derides \$3.1 Million Fine Against Boeing.

Senator Richard Blumenthal, ranking member of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigation, in a letter to FAA Administrator Bryan Bedford, called proposed fines totaling \$3.1 million against Boeing little more than a rounding error for Boeing given that the company generated nearly \$39 billion in revenue just in the two quarters overlapping the period of the violations. "For Boeing, such fines are easily absorbed as the cost of doing business, not a meaningful deterrent to dangerous behavior. Unless penalties rise to the level that forces the company to invest in real safety reforms, the risks to the flying public will persist." He asked FAA to provide, by October 7, all related correspondence with Boeing and written responses to several requests.

3. "Aviation Funding Stability Act" Introduced in House.

As a budget agreement wound down to September 30, the "Aviation Funding Stability Act" was introduced by members of the House Aviation Subcommittee to insulate FAA programs and personnel from a government shutdown. "The aviation system is too critical to be caught up in Washington's budget battles," said sponsors. "This bill would allow FAA to tap into the Airport and Airway Trust Fund [which] typically generates enough revenue from the domestic passenger ticket tax, commercial fuel tax, general aviation gasoline tax, and cargo tax to sustain FAA programs during a lapse." An identical measure was introduced in 2021.

4. **“Mental Health in Aviation Act” Passes House.**

The House passed the “Mental Health in Aviation Act,” bipartisan legislation that requires FAA to revise regulations to encourage voluntary mental health disclosures and treatment, implement recommendations of the Mental Health and Aviation Medical Clearances Aviation Rulemaking Committee (ARC) within two years, and provide funding to recruit and train more aviation medical examiners, including psychiatrists; \$1,500,000 for each of fiscal years 2026 through 2029 would be appropriated for a public information campaign. The current system perpetuates a culture of silence, said bill sponsors. While aviation professionals are mandated to report if they seek mental health care, once they take that step, they are faced with delays and overregulation in the process of returning to work. The legislation is endorsed by the Pilot Mental Health Campaign, Air Line Pilots Association, Airlines for America, National Air Traffic Controllers Association, National Flight Training Alliance, National Business Aviation Association, NetJets Association of Shared Aircraft Pilots and Southwest Airlines Pilots Association.

5. **“FASTER Act” Reintroduced.**

The “Funding for Aviation Screeners and Threat Elimination Restoration (FASTER) Act” was reintroduced in the Senate on the 24th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. The bill would “ensure airline security fees bolster aviation safety,” said bill sponsors Edward Markey and Richard Blumenthal, referring to the diversion of revenue collected from the September 11 Security Fee to pay for unrelated government spending. “Each year, this diverted funding totals over \$1 billion. . . . The legislation would also give TSA access to September 11 Security Fee revenue during a lapse in appropriations, giving TSA much-needed flexibility to pay TSOs [Transportation Security Officers] in the event of a future shutdown.”

6. **Bill Reauthorizes, Expands Counter-UAS Authorities.**

The House Transportation Committee approved the “Counter-UAS Authority Security, Safety, and Reauthorization Act,” which requires FAA to develop a plan for counter-UAS operations at U.S. airports. “With upcoming multinational events like the 2026 FIFA World Cup and the 2028 Olympics, we must be proactive about securing our airspace,” said Committee Chairman Sam Graves.

VII. **BILATERAL AND STATE DEPARTMENT NEWS**

1. **Congress Calls for Taiwan Membership, Participation in ICAO.**

Lawmakers from the House and Senate separately called for Taiwan's participation in the 42nd ICAO Assembly and the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly. In a letter to Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Secretary of Transportation Sean Duffy, Senator Ted Cruz urged the U.S. to “lead the world in efforts advocating for Taiwan’s full membership and participation . . . as a matter of aviation safety and national security.” “ICAO’s systematic exclusion of Taiwan from meaningful participation has been a result of coercion by the government of the People’s Republic of China and its Chinese Communist Party (CCP),” wrote Cruz, who is Chairman of the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee. . . . House Foreign Affairs Committee leaders and 19 other members wrote to ICAO President Salvatore Sciacchitano, urging that Taiwan be formally invited to participate in the triennial meeting. “Taiwan administers the Taipei Flight Information Region (FIR), one of about 300 worldwide, which manages 18 international and four domestic routes,” they noted. “In 2024, the FIR supported services from 90 airlines operating 285 passenger and cargo routes linking Taiwan with 117 cities.” Exclusion from ICAO technical meetings and secure platforms leaves Taiwan without access to critical aviation safety information and undermines international aviation standards. Additionally, China has increasingly challenged Taiwan's airspace by unilaterally designating danger zones, reserving areas for military drills, and activating new flight routes near the median line of the Taiwan Strait.

2. **FAA Conducts New Audit of Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority.**

FAA conducted a new audit of Pakistan’s Civil Aviation Authority regulatory compliance, pilot licensing procedures and safety oversight and is compiling a report. In 2020, Pakistan’s aviation safety rating was downgraded to Category 2 because it did not comply with ICAO standards under FAA’s International Aviation Safety Assessment (IASA) program. Direct flights between Pakistan and the U.S. were suspended.

VIII. EUROPE AND AFRICA

1. Alaska Launches Reykjavík Route.

Alaska Airlines will begin daily summer nonstops from Seattle to Reykjavík, from May 28 to September 8, and, in partnership with Icelandair, will offer connections across Europe.

2. Aer Lingus Adds Raleigh-Durham Service.

Aer Lingus will introduce year-round nonstops from Dublin to Raleigh-Durham; the five times weekly Airbus A321 XLR service begins in April, bringing total number of routes to North America to 26. For summer 2026 Aer Lingus will add daily flights from Dublin to New York Kennedy and Boston. Dublin to Nashville and Indianapolis will increase from four weekly flights to five, and Dublin to Orlando will increase to daily. Shannon to Boston will increase to 10 per week.

3. KLM Will Fly to San Diego This Winter.

KLM will offer 161 destinations for winter season, 92 in Europe and 69 intercontinental. Three weekly direct flights to San Diego begin in late February, and frequencies to Boston, Miami, Portland and San Francisco will increase. KLM expects to welcome its 15th and final Boeing 787-10 and three new Airbus A321neo aircraft this winter. Compared to last winter, total number of available seats will increase by 6%. There is significant capacity expansion to India (+28% compared to winter 2024), and travel to the Caribbean is becoming more popular (+17%). . . . KLM reached a provisional agreement with unions representing ground staff which includes a wage increase, improved profit-sharing and “an attractive arrangement for early retirement.”

4. Lufthansa Group Announces Restructuring.

Lufthansa announced areorganization that will strengthen and expand the market position of hub airlines, Lufthansa, SWISS, Austrian and Brussels. Network management for short- and medium-haul flights of hub airlines will be steered group-wide. Management will be bundled under group-wide functions: Hub Steering, Technology, HR and Finance. Target implementation is January 1, 2026. . . . Lufthansa is investing over €70 million on a redesign of the onboard experience; launch planned for spring 2026.

5. Martin Gauss Named CEO of Gulf Air.

See Section IX, item 5.

IX. ASIA/PACIFIC AND MIDDLE EAST

1. United To Resume Flights to Tel Aviv from Chicago, Washington D.C.

United will resume flights to Tel Aviv from Chicago O'Hare and Washington Dulles in November, services that ceased in 2023. United currently offers twice daily flights between Tel Aviv and New York Newark.

2. Alaska To Launch Seattle to Seoul Nonstops.

Alaska Airlines will launch Boeing 787-9 service from Seattle to Seoul Incheon on September 12, and will begin flying the Dreamliner on the existing Seattle-Tokyo Narita route on January 6, and on new flights from Seattle to London and Rome next spring. Alaska is establishing a Dreamliner hub in Seattle and will add a pilot base to support 787 operations. Alaska currently has four Dreamliners in the fleet.

3. China Airlines Offers Taipei-Phoenix Nonstops.

China Airlines begins three weekly nonstops between Taipei and Phoenix on December 3. Through its interline partnership with Southwest, travelers can connect to more than 50 U.S. cities. China Airlines also flies to New York, Los Angeles, Ontario (CA), San Francisco, Seattle and Vancouver, and plans to gradually increase frequency on the New York route.

4. Cathay Pacific Returns to Seattle.

Cathay Pacific will resume nonstops to Seattle from March 30 to May 31, and from September to October 24. Passengers on the five weekly Airbus A350-900 flights can connect from Hong Kong "to more than 100 destinations around the world through the Cathay Group's network." A350-1000 service between Hong Kong and Dallas-Fort Worth will increase from four weekly to daily from October 26. The summer schedule also includes service to Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, Toronto and Vancouver. Cathay Pacific will open a 10,000-square-foot lounge at New York Kennedy's new Terminal 6 in 2026.

5. Martin Gauss Named CEO of Gulf Air.

Martin Gauss was named CEO of Gulf Air, effective November 4, succeeding Group CEO Jeffrey Goh. Gauss was CEO of Latvian carrier airBaltic and earlier held senior leadership roles at Deutsche BA and Cirrus Airlines. Gulf Air Group Chairman is Khalid Taqi.

X. AMERICAS

1. United Expands Winter Schedule

United expanded its winter schedule, adding service to 15 cities from January 6, including three new weekly flights between Houston and Guatemala City and San Salvador and one new weekly flight between Houston and San Pedro Sula, Honduras.

2. Alaska Names New CEO for Hawaiian.

Diana Birkett Rakow, a Hawaiian Airlines Senior Vice President, will succeed Joe Sprague as CEO, effective October 29. She has held executive positions with Alaska Airlines for eight years and over the last year has served on the Hawaiian Board. During his 25 years with Alaska, Sprague, who is retiring, held several executive positions, became President of regional subsidiary Horizon Air in 2019, and CEO of Hawaiian upon merger with Alaska in 2024. He will remain a member of the Hawaiian Board. Alaska and Hawaiian expect to obtain a single operating certificate this fall. Ben Minicucci is CEO of Alaska Air Group.

3. JetBlue Adds Fort Lauderdale Services to Latin America, Caribbean.

JetBlue plans to launch new routes from Fort Lauderdale to Latin America and the Caribbean, including Cali, Colombia; Aruba; Cartagena, Colombia; Grand Cayman; Liberia, Costa Rica; San Pedro Sula, Honduras; and St. Maarten. The airline will also increase service to San Juan, Puerto Rico; Cancún, Mexico; Kingston, Jamaica; Punta Cana, Dominican Republic; San José, Costa Rica; and Santiago, Dominican Republic.

4. Spirit Files New Petitions for Chapter 11.

Spirit Aviation Holdings filed new petitions for Chapter 11 in the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of New York. The Court approved first day motions, enabling the airline to continue operating as usual. "A court-supervised process is the best path forward to make the changes needed to ensure our long-term success," said President and CEO Dave Davis. "We have evaluated every corner of our business and are proceeding with a comprehensive approach in which we will be far more strategic about our fleet, markets and opportunities."

5. Breeze Certified as U.S. Flag Carrier, Adds Mexico, Caribbean Flights.

Breeze Airways announced it "has been certified by FAA as a U.S. flag carrier, making it the first airline in more than 10 years to undergo this rigorous

evaluation process.” The airline will begin seasonal service to its first three international destinations, subject to government approval, this winter from six Breeze airports to Cancun, Mexico; Punta Cana, Dominican Republic; and Montego Bay, Jamaica.

6. Avelo Orders Embraer E195-E2s.

Avelo Airlines closed on a new financing round from a new partner, which, said founder and CEO Andrew Levy, will allow it “to double down on an addressable market that is too often being priced out by higher fare airlines.” Avelo placed a firm order for 50 Embraer E195-E2 aircraft, with purchase rights for 50 more; deliveries expected to begin first half 2027. List-price value of the order is \$4.4 billion, excluding purchase rights. Avelo will be the first U.S. carrier to operate Embraer’s largest and most advanced commercial aircraft. The current Avelo fleet of 22 Boeing Next Generation 737s serves 47 U.S. cities, Puerto Rico, Jamaica, Mexico and the Dominican Republic.

7. Premier Shuttle To Acquire Air Wisconsin.

Air Wisconsin signed a non-binding letter of intent (LOI) with Premier Shuttle Holdings for sale of its airline operation and certain assets. The regional has issued notices to employees in Appleton and Milwaukee, which it expects to begin to implement on October 28. Air Wisconsin said Premier is pursuing the transaction “because of the quality of Air Wisconsin’s fleet, the strength and expertise of its maintenance operation, and its operating certificate, which would allow Premier to expand into larger aircraft such as the CRJ-700 and E175.” Premier currently offers all-business-class service on premium leisure routes in the eastern U.S., including between New York and South Florida. An affiliate of Slate Aviation, the operating brand of TriState Charter, Premier, with Slate, would own and operate 60 CRJ-200s if transaction closes. Assets not included will remain with Air Wisconsin parent Harbor Diversified, which will continue to pursue opportunities in aircraft, engine and parts sales and leasing, and would employ certain Air Wisconsin employees. Air Wisconsin is withdrawing from an Essential Air Services contract for flights between Mid-Ohio Valley Regional Airport and Charlotte, North Carolina, which it secured after its capacity purchase agreement with American Airlines was terminated.

8. Air Canada Flight Attendants Reject Tentative Agreement.

Air Canada flight attendants rejected a tentative agreement reached in August, because, said the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), even with the proposed increase “they would still earn less than federal minimum wage.” Air Canada said the parties agreed that “no labor disruption could be initiated, and therefore there will be no strike or lock-out, and flights will continue to operate.” . . . Air Canada estimated the financial impact of the labor disruption

to be a C\$375 million loss of operating income and C\$430 million revenue loss, mainly due to customer refunds and compensation and lower than expected bookings in August and early September. Passengers were reimbursed C\$90 million for out-of-pocket expenses and labor-related operating costs.

9. Air Lease To Merge with New Dublin-Based Holding Company.

Los Angeles-based Air Lease agreed to be acquired by a new Dublin-based holding company, whose shares are held by Sumitomo Corporation, SMBC Aviation Capital and others. The transaction “represents the best path forward for our company,” said Chairman Steven Udvar-Hazy, who launched Air Lease in 2010. In 1973 he co-founded International Lease Finance Corporation (ILFC), which was sold to AIG in 1990 for \$1.3 billion. In 2003, the Dulles Annex of the National Air and Space Museum was renamed the Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center for its major donor.

10. Alaska Launches Reykjavík Route.

See Section VIII, item 1.

11. Aer Lingus Adds Raleigh-Durham Service.

See Section VIII, item 2.

12. KLM Will Fly to San Diego This Winter.

See Section VIII, item 3.

13. United To Resume Flights to Tel Aviv from Chicago, Washington D.C.

See Section IX, item 1.

14. Alaska To Launch Seattle to Seoul Nonstops.

See Section IX, item 2.

15. China Airlines Offers Taipei-Phoenix Nonstops.

See Section IX, item 3.

16. Cathay Pacific Returns to Seattle.

See Section IX, item 4.