



## PRESS RELEASE

**For Immediate Release  
August 3, 2011**

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### **Congresswoman Waters Urges Congressional Leaders to End the Shutdown of the FAA**

**Washington** – *Congresswoman Maxine Waters (D-Calif.) today urged Republican and Democratic leaders of the House of Representatives and the Senate to take all necessary and appropriate action to end the partial shutdown of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), including – if necessary – immediately reconvening the House and the Senate to pass legislation that will allow all furloughed FAA employees to return to work. Congresswoman Waters’ congressional district includes Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), the world’s sixth busiest airport, which has been directly impacted by the shutdown.*

*Congresswoman Waters expressed her concerns in a letter to Speaker John Boehner, Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, Majority Leader Harry Reid, and Minority Leader Mitch McConnell. Copies of the letter were sent to Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood and leaders of congressional committees with jurisdiction over the FAA. The text of the letter follows:*

“As the elected representative of one the world’s busiest airports, I am deeply concerned by the continuing partial shutdown of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). I urge you to take all necessary and appropriate action to end this shutdown, including – if necessary – immediately reconvening the House of Representatives and the Senate to pass legislation that will allow all furloughed FAA employees to return to work.

As you know, the FAA was forced to shut down many of its operations eleven days ago because Congress failed to pass legislation to extend its funding authorization. As a result, up to 4,000 FAA employees in 35 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico were placed on furlough. Those affected include many of the FAA’s engineers, scientists, research analysts, administrative assistants, computer specialists, program managers, environmental protection specialists, and community planners. These government workers are being forced to live without pay and are unable to do their jobs developing our air travel infrastructure and serving the flying

public. Given the fact that our nation's unemployment rate continues to hover above nine percent, it is unconscionable that the federal government would allow these workers to remain unemployed unnecessarily.

Last week, the FAA was forced to issue stop work orders to construction and technology contractors for critical airport modernization projects. As a result, dozens of construction projects to build and modernize air traffic control towers and other aviation infrastructure were immediately halted. This work stoppage risks putting numerous construction workers and other private sector employees out of work as well.

In my home state of California, the FAA shutdown has delayed \$131.5 million in funding for airport modernization projects and furloughed 203 FAA employees in the Los Angeles area alone. But the actual impact on the Los Angeles area is far greater. Los Angeles International Airport (LAX)—which is located in my Congressional District— is the world's sixth busiest airport. LAX creates an estimated 59,000 jobs in or near the airport and has a total annual economic impact estimated at \$60 billion. In 2008, 60 million passengers and 1.8 million tons of freight and mail passed through LAX. All of this economic activity depends upon the safety and efficiency of our nation's air travel system.

The work stoppage is already having an immediate negative impact on LAX, delaying a much needed project to design and install new runway status lights. These lights improve visibility for pilots and help them see when it is safe to enter, cross or take off on a runway. Stopping work on important projects like this one will not only delay their completion but also significantly increase the long-term costs for taxpayers.

Unfortunately, LAX is not alone in suffering from the effects of stop work orders. Nationwide, over \$250 million in contracts for runway status lights have been suspended. Also affected are nearly \$20 million in construction and engineering contracts to protect air traffic control towers from earthquakes and over \$14 million in projects to research weather technology systems for air traffic facilities and aircraft cockpits. This is no way to run one of the top air transportation systems in the world.

The partial shutdown of the FAA is also fiscally irresponsible. The shutdown is costing the federal government almost \$30 million a day in lost revenue from uncollected airline taxes. The federal government has already lost approximately \$300 million as a result of this impasse. If the shutdown is allowed to continue until the House of Representatives is scheduled to return on September 7<sup>th</sup>, the federal government will lose \$1 billion more. This extraordinary loss of funds will only serve to exacerbate our national debt.

How can we claim to be concerned about deficits and the creation and maintenance of American jobs and allow this situation to continue?

I urge you to work together with Republican and Democratic leaders in both the House and the Senate in order to resolve all outstanding issues interfering with the extension of the FAA's authorization and allow all furloughed FAA employees to return to their jobs forthwith. These employees are dedicated public servants who work hard to ensure safe and efficient air

travel for the flying public. They are proud of the work they do. They need their jobs, and the American people need their services.”

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