



THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION

WASHINGTON DC 20590

February 22, 2013

Airlines for America
National Business Aviation Association
Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association
Department of Defense
Regional Airline Association
American Association of Airport Executives
Airports Council International - North America

Dear Aviation Colleagues:

To prepare for the possibility of a budget sequestration on March 1, 2013, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is making plans to reduce its expenditures by approximately \$600 million for the remainder of FY 2013. We are committed to working with all of you to manage the impact that these automatic cuts will have on the aviation system and on air travelers. The purpose of this letter is to advise you of the operational changes we are considering to enable you to make your own plans to minimize the impact to the operations of your organizations and members.

Safety is our top priority, and in the course of implementing the operational changes described below, we may reduce the efficiency of the national airspace in order to maintain the highest safety standards.

Among the changes that we are considering that will have an impact on FY 2013 operations are:

1. Furlough the vast majority of the FAA's nearly 47,000 employees (including all management and non-management employees working within the Air Traffic Organization) for approximately one day per pay period until the end of the fiscal year in September, with a maximum of two days per pay period.
2. Eliminate midnight shifts in over 60 towers across the country.
3. Close over 100 air traffic control towers at airports with fewer than 150,000 flight operations or 10,000 commercial operations per year.
4. Reduce preventive maintenance and equipment provisioning and support for all NAS equipment.

All of these changes will be finalized as to scope and details through collaborative discussions with our users and our unions. We will commence furloughs and start facility shut-downs in April.

As a consequence of employee furloughs and prolonged equipment outages resulting from lower parts inventories and fewer technicians, travelers should expect delays. Flights to major cities like New York, Chicago and San Francisco could experience delays of up to 90 minutes during peak hours because we will have fewer controllers on staff.

We are aware that these service reductions will adversely affect commercial, corporate and general aviation operators. We also expect that as airlines estimate the potential impacts of these furloughs, they will change their schedules and cancel flights.

Beyond the impacts to air traffic, aviation safety employees will also experience furloughs that will affect airlines, aviation manufacturers and individual pilots who need FAA safety approvals and certifications. While the Agency will continue to address safety risks that could impact operations of the national airspace system, a slowed certification and approval process due to furloughs could negatively affect passengers and all segments of the aviation industry.

This letter is just the beginning of what will be an ongoing dialogue between FAA, our unions, and the airspace users to make the best decisions to try to reduce the negative impact to travelers. We will be scheduling a meeting next week to enable you to bring forward your additional questions, concerns, and suggestions.

Sincerely,



Ray LaHood
Secretary



Michael Huerta
Administrator, Federal Aviation
Administration