

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE DONALD D. ENGEN, FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATOR, BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION, SUBCOMMITTEE ON AVIATION, CONCERNING AIRPORTS TRANSFER LEGISLATION. JUNE 26, 1985.

Madam Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

I appreciate having the opportunity to submit a brief statement supplementing Secretary Dole's testimony concerning the importance of enacting legislation to transfer National and Dulles Airports to an independent regional Airports Authority. I regret that I am unable to appear in person before the Subcommittee on this important issue because of other Congressional commitments.

Since Secretary Dole's testimony comprehensively discusses the merits of transferring National and Dulles from Federal to local control, I wish to stress briefly two key points,^{so} that the remarkable group of employees constituting FAA's workforce at National and Dulles not be slighted in the proposed transfer.

Throughout the process of developing a proposal to transfer the Airports to a regional authority, from the initial Holton Commission recommendations through the extensive drafting process, we have all focused on assuring the equitable treatment of the 650 employees who work at the Airports. These individuals faithfully perform the many functions necessary to

keep the Airports running efficiently and safely. Their tasks range from law enforcement to groundskeeping to firefighting. Regardless of their job, these employees have been the key to running our Airports as well as any in the country. We are proud, and justifiably so, of the outstanding work they perform on behalf of the traveling public.

We have made special efforts in the development of this legislative package to assure that the FAA employees at the Airports remain secure in their jobs and can choose employment benefits best for each upon transfer of the airports to the Airport Authority. I believe that the employee provisions of our bill are needed for the benefit and protection of our employees. These provisions, dealing with health benefits, salary, retention, and the like, are key elements of our proposal, not only from the perspective of recognizing the important contributions these employees have made but in terms of assuring the continued availability of this outstanding workforce to the new Airport Authority.

I would also like to note that, from my perspective, it is important for Congress to move quickly now to enact the pending transfer legislation. I wish to make clear to our airport employees that the bill protects their interests in the best way we know how, but we have effectively introduced a large element

of uncertainty into each person's career that only Congressional action can resolve. It is my goal to maintain employee morale at the Airports and avoid uncertainty in their future status. This uncertainty could develop if there were substantial delay in enacting transfer legislation.

The second key point is that there is an operational imperative to improve each of these two airports to accommodate to passenger traffic. The passengers deserve no less. The transfer of authority will, in my view, enhance the capacity to improve operations at both airports.

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to offer my views.