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MAYORS SHARE AIRPORT SECURITY CONCERNS WITH MAGAW

Urge TSA to Meet Deadlines for Explosive Detections Machines and Federal Screeners

Washington, DC – The nation’s mayors today again urged the Transportation Security Administration to meet mandated deadlines to install explosives detection machines and federal security screeners in all U.S. airports. In a conference call with John Magaw, Under Secretary of Transportation for Security, members of the U.S. Conference of Mayors’ Task Force on Airport Security said meeting mandated airport security deadlines is essential to continue rebuilding consumer confidence in the freedom to travel.

“Mayors are seeking assistance from the federal government to reimburse cities for added airport security costs incurred as a result of September 11,” said Los Angeles Mayor James Hahn, who chairs the task force. Cities have struggled to afford the additional security measures needed post-September 11, especially in light of the recession and other homeland defense spending needs.”

“There must not be a double standard for airport security,” said New Orleans Mayor Marc Morial, President of the Conference. “Every U.S. airport, not just the largest, should be equipped with explosive detection machines by the end of the year, as mandated by law.”

The conference call was the latest in a series of discussions mayors have held with Secretary Mineta and Under Secretary Magaw regarding efforts to increase airport security and continue rebuilding consumer confidence. Participating mayors raised several other issues, including –

- Deadline for bomb detection machines – Mayors asked whether the December 31 deadline for the bomb detection machines would be met by the end of the year, as expected.
- Reimbursement for local governments – Mayors asked for the federal government to reimburse cities for the added airport security costs incurred as a result of September 11. Cities have struggled to afford the additional security measures needed post-September 11, especially in light of the recession and other homeland defense spending priorities.

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- Screeners as federal employees – Mayors reiterated their support for making all airport security screeners federal employees by the November deadline mandated by law. The Conference has voiced strong support for federalizing airport security since the days immediately following September 11. Mayors also asked whether screeners would be trained to handle conflict resolution and offer quality customer service to increase their effectiveness.
- Increased communication between Mayors and Federal Security Directors – Mayors want all Federal Security Directors, once hired and deployed to cities, to meet regularly with mayors about changes to the security system. Mayors also requested to meet with traveling airport security assessment teams (called “jump teams”) as they review airport security measures.
- Equal screening for all passengers – Mayors stressed the importance of thorough security screening for all passengers including those in first class.
- Ongoing dialogue and communication updates with TSA officials – Mayors voiced their desire to continue the ongoing dialogue with Transportation Security Administration officials.

During the call, Salt Lake City Mayor Rocky Anderson thanked Undersecretary Magaw for his help in ensuring safety to for all guests during the 2002 Winter Olympics.

Immediately following the terrorist attacks, Conference President New Orleans Mayor Marc Morial appointed the Task Force on Airport Security. In addition to Chairman and Los Angeles Mayor James K. Hahn, task force members include Boston Mayor Thomas M. Menino, Charleston Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Charlotte Mayor Patrick McCrory, Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley, Denver Mayor Wellington E. Webb, Ft. Worth Mayor Kenneth L. Barr, Gary Mayor Scott King, Hempstead Mayor James A. Garner, Houston Mayor Lee P. Brown, Knoxville Mayor Victor H. Ashe, Laredo Mayor Elizabeth Flores, Las Vegas Mayor Oscar B. Goodman, Los Angeles Mayor James K. Hahn, Miami Mayor Alexander Penelas, New Orleans Mayor Marc H. Morial, Newark Mayor Sharpe James, Orlando Mayor Glenda E. Hood, Philadelphia Mayor John F. Street, Reno Mayor Jeff Griffin, Salt Lake City Mayor Rocky Anderson, San Francisco Mayor Willie L. Brown Jr., and St. Louis Mayor Francis G. Slay.

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