

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

March 6, 2020

John E. Potter
President and Chief Executive Officer
Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority
1 Aviation Circle
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Mr. Potter:

As many organizations around the country formulate their responses to the recent outbreak and spread of the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19, we write to discuss the steps that the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA) is taking to protect travelers in its facilities. Dulles International Airport and Reagan National Airport are two of the busiest airports in the region, serving as a gateway that connects the Washington D.C. area with the rest of the country and the world. Each day, on average, more than 66,000 and 64,000 travelers pass through Dulles and Reagan National, respectively.¹

Beginning in late January, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) required flights with passengers arriving from or having stayed in China to arrive only at specific airports with enhanced public health services and protocols. On February 3, 2020, DHS expanded this list of airports to include Dulles. DHS has now expanded travel restrictions to people who have recently traveled to Iran.

As stated by DHS in its directive: “[e]ntry screening is part of a layered approach used with other public health measures already in place to detect arriving travelers who are exhibiting signs of illness, reporting of ill travelers by air carriers during travel, and referral of ill travelers arriving at a U.S. port of entry by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to appropriate public health officials to slow and prevent the spread of communicable disease into the United States.”² In addition to these DHS arrival protocols, the State Department has also issued “Level 3” travel advisories for other countries – Italy and Korea – advising people to reconsider travel due to recent outbreaks of COVID-19.³

The first cases of COVID-19 in the Washington D.C. region were confirmed in the last 24 hours. As are many Americans, we are concerned by the fast-paced spread of the virus we have seen so far. We want to make sure that every effort is being made to slow the spread of the virus through our travel centers – most importantly our airports, which connect the region with countries that have had widespread outbreaks of the virus. While many Americans will need to practice social distancing in some way, we recognize that air travel, for many, is still very much a necessary part of their lives, whether for personal or business reasons. That is why we hope that our two large

¹ https://www.mwaa.com/sites/default/files/BOD/2019-02/tab_5.2_executive_vice_presidents_report.pdf

² <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2020-02-07/pdf/2020-02413.pdf>

³ <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html/>

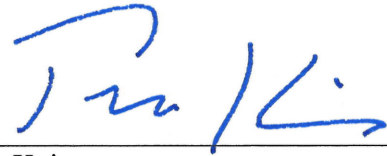
airport facilities in the area will do everything possible to ensure the safety of travelers who use Dulles and Reagan National in the coming weeks and months. The more we can slow the spread of the virus, the more time it gives healthcare professionals in our area to prepare, which will result in better care for those potentially affected.

We appreciate the steps that MWAA, CBP, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the airlines are taking in terms of identification and screenings. We must work together to ensure we are doing everything possible to protect travelers, airport employees, and Virginians in the surrounding communities. We also ask that you please keep us apprised of your ongoing response to the virus. We stand ready to help in any way we can.

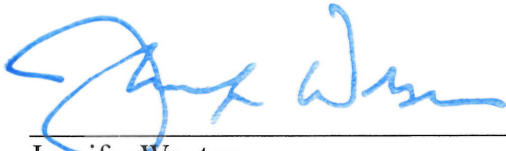
Sincerely,



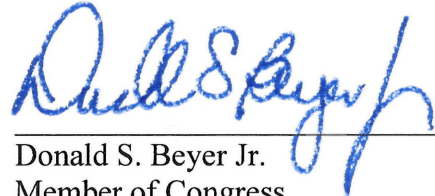
Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Jennifer Wexton
Member of Congress



Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress