



Ernest Wooden Jr.
President and CEO

I am writing to encourage you to preserve Open Skies. For 25 years Open Skies has provided a free and open market that has been the cornerstone of growth within the international aviation industry. Over the years, cities across the United States have benefited enormously from open access to international markets that have allowed millions of international visitors to travel to the United States.

As access to international markets has grown, the benefits of Open Skies has expanded from the top major gateways to mid-size airports across the country that today attract international trade and travelers.

LAX is the nation's second busiest airport with more than 70 million passengers, and is proud to be the number one U.S. airport for origin and destination travel. This ranking is, in large part, due to the growth of foreign carriers, many of which have received some level of government support.

Today, LAX offers more than 1,000 weekly nonstop flights to 71 international destinations in 27 countries on 48 commercial air carriers. The U.S. legacy carriers are indeed important to LAX and are collaborative partners in the growth of international travel. Given that LAX is not a hub airport or dominated by any one U.S. carrier, its international growth has been dependent on its ability to attract the foreign flag carriers which have contributed mightily to the Los Angeles economy.

After years of pursuing the lucrative Gulf visitor market, Los Angeles has made significant inroads to attracting this region which is significantly impacting LA's hospitality community as well as retail and restaurants sectors. The singular factor in attracting this market has been LAX's ability to attract air service between LAX and the Gulf region.

As a major destination, Los Angeles acutely understands the economic importance of international visitation and the intrinsic link to airline service and route development. Last year, the Los Angeles economy benefited from \$19.6 billion in direct visitor spend – with 33% of that spend generated directly from international visitors.

Restricting capacity and airline competition will directly limit a destination's ability to grow its international visitor market. Instead, Open Skies should be hailed for the expansion of the international marketplace over the past two decades and supported as the path to continued growth to new markets.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ernest Wooden Jr." in a cursive style.

Ernest Wooden Jr.
President & CEO
Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board