

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 8, 2008

Mr. Henry Krakowski
Chief Operating Officer, Air Traffic Organization
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Mr. Krakowski:

Our purpose in writing is to respectfully request that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) postpone its plans to separate radar and tower air traffic services at the Orlando International Airport (MCO) until Congress has had an opportunity to complete its work on FAA Reauthorization.

First, let us be clear: we are NOT asking the FAA to cancel its realignment efforts at MCO. We are merely requesting that it be postponed until the FAA and/or Congress can implement a process for consideration of facility and service realignments. Waiting until such a review process can be employed would ensure that realignments serve their stated purpose: to provide operational benefit to users, increase safety, increase system efficiency and save money.

As you know, last March the FAA announced its intentions to de-combine the tower and radar functions at Miami, Philadelphia, Orlando and Memphis. Since then, the FAA has canceled its plans for Miami and Philadelphia after reviewing alternative configuration arrangements. The fact that these two facilities were removed from realignment consideration raises concerns regarding the Agency's current criteria and selection process used in determining realignments.

We are also unconvinced that all alternative configuration arrangements have been reviewed for Orlando, or that de-combining these facilities would have any benefit to the flying public or the taxpayer. As such, we believe it to be in the best interest of all parties to delay the realignment efforts at MCO until a process for realignment considerations can be put in place.

Additional realignment concerns we maintain include:

- The FAA admits staffing a de-combined Tower and TRACON will require more controllers and managers because the Agency will lose the flexibility to shift controllers between tower and TRACON.
- The MCO de-consolidation will create another layer of administration and bureaucracy within the facility and the FAA. The FAA would actually create two separately named facilities where one existed before, increasing rather than reducing the number of FAA facilities.

- An FAA Manager in Atlanta, a once-combined facility that was de-combined over a decade ago, recently acknowledged that he needed controllers to be certified in both Tower and TRACON operations, validating the efficiency of maintaining combined facilities.

Because combined tower and terminal approach control TRACON facilities have served our communities well, providing first-rate services, efficiency and safety to passenger and cargo aircraft, we believe that any efforts to de-combine such facilities should be done so only after proper vetting and scrutiny. In such cases, where viable options exist that would help maintain the integrity of the facility, those options should be given all due consideration. As such, we once again request that the FAA suspend realignment efforts in Orlando until all issues above can be addressed to our satisfaction.

We appreciate your attention to these matters and await your timely response.

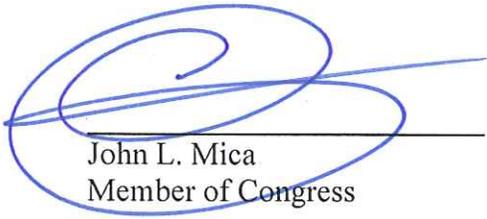
Sincerely,



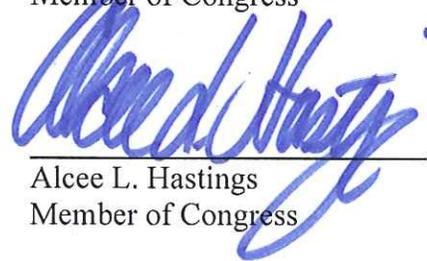
Bill Nelson
U.S. Senate



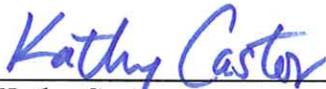
Corrine Brown
Member of Congress



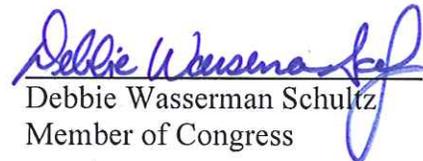
John L. Mica
Member of Congress



Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress



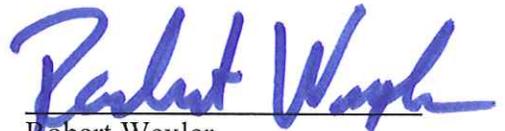
Kathy Castor
Member of Congress



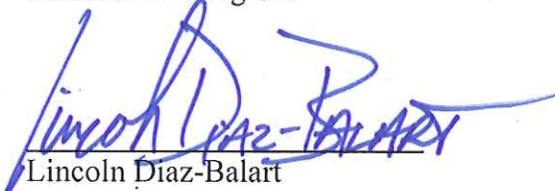
Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress



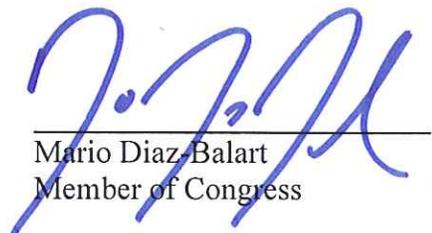
Allen Boyd
Member of Congress



Robert Wexler
Member of Congress



Lincoln Diaz-Balart
Member of Congress



Mario Diaz-Balart
Member of Congress



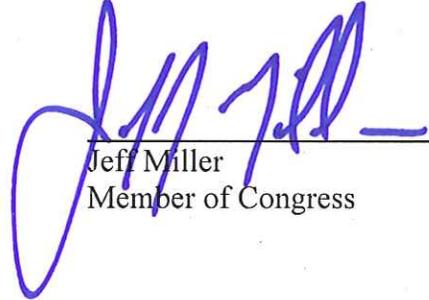
Ron Klein
Member of Congress



Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
Member of Congress



Vern Buchanan
Member of Congress



Jeff Miller
Member of Congress