



U.S. Department of Justice

Office of Legislative Affairs

Office of the Assistant Attorney General

Washington, D.C. 20530

October 29, 2001

The Honorable Don Young
Chairman
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This letter responds to your letter of October 17, 2001, requesting the views of the Department of Justice on the delegation of responsibility for proposed new national transportation security functions.

The Department fully concurs with the Administration's position that the new Transportation Security Agency should be housed at the Department of Transportation (DOT). Effective transportation security requires understanding and managing the complex interaction between transportation infrastructure and the licensing and regulation of vehicle, vessel, and airplane operators. DOT possesses both the institutional understanding and infrastructure to implement quickly new, critical aviation security measures.

Unlike the Justice Department, DOT has both a broad transportation-related statutory mandate and nearly 35 years of significant operational experience with transportation regulation, infrastructure, security, and enforcement. Further, DOT's two components with law enforcement authority, the United States Coast Guard and the Federal Aviation Administration, possess a unique infrastructure of law enforcement personnel and expertise, with broad domestic law enforcement authority, upon which Congress can build and enhance DOT's law enforcement authority and responsibilities.

In light of DOT's strong capabilities and DOJ's many responsibilities in fighting the war on terrorism, we feel that our resources would be better spent carrying out our current mission than developing a new transportation infrastructure and expertise.

We also feel that attempting to divide responsibility for aviation security between two separate agencies is not the most effective way to enhance aviation security.

I commend you in sponsoring legislation to put strong federal control of aviation security
The Honorable Don Young

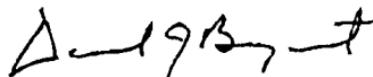
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in the hands of the Department of Transportation and I join the President in urging the House to act quickly to pass aviation legislation. The Department of Justice offers its services in working with you and the other members of Congress to resolve any technical legal adjustments that may need to be made.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our views. Please do not hesitate to call upon us if we may be of additional assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Bryant". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Daniel J. Bryant
Assistant Attorney General

cc: The Honorable James L. Oberstar
Ranking Minority Member