



January 22, 2018

The Honorable Maria Cantwell  
United States Senate  
511 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Cantwell:

**I am writing to once again request your help to ensure that Seattle-Tacoma International Airport is receiving the TSA staffing and resources it needs to accommodate our growing passenger screening needs.**

Sea-Tac Airport continues to be one of the fastest growing airports in the country; after three years of double digit passenger growth, we saw close to two million additional travelers use our airport in 2017. While we are investing billions in infrastructure and technology upgrades to add capacity to our facility, we still rely heavily on federal staffing to ensure that we meet our security and customer service objectives related to passenger wait times at security screening checkpoints.

**Unfortunately, we have seen significant increases in passenger screening wait times at our airport over the last six months.** After a successful summer travel season, the fall and winter have brought average wait times that are sometimes double the goal we have for throughput; last week for example, only 65% of passengers made it through security in less than twenty minutes. We are deeply concerned that these problems will not only continue, but increase as the busy spring travel season approaches.

**We deeply value the good relationship we have with our local TSA, and they have been an excellent partner in addressing past issues; however, we believe that the solutions to our current issues require engagement from top TSA leadership.** In particular, we would like your help working with TSA officials in Washington, DC to solve three ongoing issues:

- 1) *Passenger Screening Canines:* We are down to only five TSA passenger screening canines at our airport, after having as many as nine this summer and being allocated ten by the staffing model. These dogs can double screening lane throughput, and are a highly effective resource to increase checkpoint efficiency.
- 2) *TSA Staffing:* We are seeing decreasing numbers of TSA staff at our checkpoints, which we find especially troubling given that Sea-Tac is implementing new technology that relieve TSA of many non-passenger screening duties. We would expect that these innovations – such as freeing TSA staff from having to monitor exit lanes – would result in more available staff for passenger screening duties.
- 3) *EAPS Implementation:* We are measuring significant reductions in throughput rate due to the implementation of TSA's Enhanced Accessible Property Screening (EAPS) program, despite assurances that any efficiency reductions would only be temporary while TSA staff

learned the new system. Manual bag checks have more than doubled, yet so far 62% of the EAPS bag checks are due to permissible food items like bananas and sandwiches.

We are deeply appreciative of your consistent focus on helping to ensure that Sea-Tac remains a key driver of our regional and statewide economy, and we understand that TSA has many limitations and challenges that the new Administrator is continuing to work through. **However, we cannot head into the spring travel season without seeing significant improvements, and so we request your help engaging TSA leadership in both short-term and long-term solutions to these issues.** In particular, we think it would be important for the Administrator to travel to Sea-Tac to observe our challenges firsthand.

We look forward to hearing back from you on this ask, and to continuing to work collaboratively with your office and TSA. Thank you again for your leadership on behalf of our airport.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized loop that encircles the name 'Lance Lyttle'.

Lance Lyttle  
Managing Director  
Seattle-Tacoma International Airport