

# Noise Abatement

I recently attended a meeting in which government regulators, manufacturers and suppliers, airport operators, airline management, labor, general aviation operators, and Washington policymakers and advocates came together to discuss the future of the airline industry. Make no mistake,



everyone agreed that the future is challenging and perhaps even bleak if the status quo continues.

Foreign competition is growing rapidly, often backed by state sponsorship, and we are already beginning to see the negative effect on our industry and our economy. Even though many obvious differences exist among the stakeholders attending this meeting,

one point was echoed by all: In order for our industry to succeed and be profitable and grow, we must “stop the noise.”

What’s the noise? Quite simply, all the different, dissimilar asks we as an entire industry make in the halls of Congress. Fewer taxes, more taxes; fewer Open Skies agreements, more Open Skies agreements; tighter foreign ownership rules, more lenient foreign ownership rules; One Level of Safety—except for cargo airlines; more rigorous standards for airline pilot training, fewer hours for pilot training. The list goes on and on.

One of the meeting participants, an airport operator, astutely noted that because the airline industry is made up of so many different factions, often with disparate interests, when we all separately knock on the doors of members of Congress, it’s “just easier for them to say no, and that is why we are still at status quo.” And in the competitive global marketplace, the status quo is not cutting it any longer.

At the meeting, I frequently offered, as did many other participants, that the time has come—and in fact is long overdue—to look at each other not as rivals but instead as potential allies. There are many successful examples of industry cooperation to build on, including the development of Known Crewmember, the passage of FAA reauthorization, and changes in the way the U.S. Export-Import Bank does business that will protect airline jobs.

We are also working with others in the industry to promote the development and use of biofuels to bring down our fuel costs and reduce carbon emissions. And a broad coalition of airline leaders successfully worked together to pass legislation to allow the government to prevent U.S. airlines from taking part in the European Union’s illegal tax on airlines, dubbed the emissions trading scheme. Relationships matter, and working together stops the noise.

In this hyper-competitive industry, working together going forward will be a challenge, as many of us are driven by differ-

ent goals. However, what has become very apparent to anyone paying attention to the airline industry is the interdependent relationships of the several components of the industry. Without airplanes, there is no need for airports. Without airports, there is no need for airlines. Without airlines, there is no need for airline pilots. Without airline pilots, there is no need for air traffic control. You get the point.

We’re interconnected, and it’s best for everyone if we all take a step back and understand how important it is that we form strong partnerships with other industry stakeholders so that they respect our priorities and consider them when developing their own strategic plans. And we must do the same.

It’s much easier to focus on our differences rather than working together to find solutions. What that gets us is rhetoric, and as one meeting participant said, the status quo. Since becoming ALPA president two years ago, I’ve been focused on working together to achieve our goals. I know how important it

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is to develop partnerships and discover the commonalities we share. By doing this, we can focus on our similarities and make progress.

In the coming year, ALPA will be hosting a number of symposiums and conferences on topics ranging from aviation safety and security to remotely piloted aircraft to addressing the tax burden on the airline industry. We will be stepping up to take the lead, bringing together stakeholders from across the spectrum to weigh in and work with us on the important issues the industry faces.

Just as airline industry stakeholders must step up and find ways to work together, we as a union must focus on what unites us, not on what divides us. As an industry, we must work together to take on the global marketplace. As a union, we must unite to show our strength and resolve, so that we can be successful in achieving our global agenda.

Capt. Lee Moak, ALPA President