



***NEWS from the T&I Committee***  
***Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure***  
***U.S. House of Representatives, 2165 Rayburn HOB,***  
***Washington, DC 20515***  
[www.house.gov/transportation](http://www.house.gov/transportation)  
***Hon. James L. Oberstar (Minn.), Chairman***

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***For Immediate Release, Monday, April 30, 2007***  
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**Oberstar Statement on Signing  
Of US-EU Open Skies Pact**

WASHINGTON—Rep. James L. Oberstar (Minn.), Chairman of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, today released the following statement in response to the signing of an “open skies” aviation trade agreement between the United States and the European Union:

STATEMENT OF  
THE HONORABLE JAMES L. OBERSTAR  
ON THE SIGNING OF THE UNITED STATES – EUROPEAN UNION  
OPEN SKIES AGREEMENT  
APRIL 30, 2007

Today, the United States (U.S.) and the European Union (EU) will sign a historic Open Skies Agreement. This is an important step in international aviation and in cooperation between the U.S. and Europe. The new rights that the agreement grants will result in more competition and service, benefiting passengers and shippers on both sides of the Atlantic.

It took a long period of negotiations to reach this agreement. The EU insisted that we give foreign investors opportunities to control U.S. airlines. The Bush Administration attempted to accommodate these demands which were contrary to long standing U.S. law and precedent. After several votes in the Congress rejecting the Administration’s proposals, the Administration withdrew a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, which would have given foreign investors substantial rights to control our airlines.

***MORE...***

**OBERSTAR/OPEN SKIES**  
**APRIL 30, 2007**  
**ADD ONE**

I want to make it clear that as the agreement is implemented, our Committee will conduct thorough oversight to prevent any backsliding on the foreign control issue.

The Open Skies agreement indicates that policies on foreign control of U.S. airlines will be developed on a case-by-case basis, rather than by a general rule. The critical question is whether this process will result in authorizing foreign control that would not have been authorized under prior policies. We will be carefully reviewing any post-Open Skies Department of Transportation (DOT) decisions made in cases involving foreign control. Secretary of Transportation Peters recently wrote me: "I can assure you that the provisions on foreign investment in the U.S. – E.U. Agreement reflect, but do not change U.S. law and Department practice [on foreign control] . . ."

I expect Secretary Peters and the Department to honor this commitment.

We will also oversee the second stage of negotiations established by the Agreement. I am concerned that the provisions of the Agreement describe the second stage as including discussions of "[a]dditional foreign investment opportunities". It should be clearly understood that I and many of my colleagues will not allow these "opportunities" to result in added foreign control of U.S. airlines.

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