



Consumer Travel Alliance

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European Passengers' Federation
Fédération Européenne des Voyageurs
Europäischer Fahrgastverband
Europese Reizigersfederatie



Consumer Federation of America

1620 Street, N.W., Suite 200
Washington, DC 20006

September 20, 2010

Mr. Ray LaHood
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Secretary LaHood:

The undersigned are a group of consumer leaders who are concerned about the current state of airline pricing. We are signing this letter to urge the Department of Transportation to require airlines to disclose all fees in advance through every ticketing channel in which airlines sell their seats so that consumers can compare the total cost of travel.

Since the airlines have begun to “unbundle” their airfares and charge a fee for baggage that was once included in the price of the airline ticket, it seems that the advertised airfare will almost always be subjected to additional and surprising airline fees. Fees are imposed for checked baggage, seat reservations, early boarding, front-of-the plane and other seats, pillows and blankets and many other services that were once a part of the airline ticket costs.

Rather than calling for regulation of the amount of these fees, we are simply asking for true fee transparency. Hidden fees are a violation of a traveler’s most basic right: to know how much they will have to pay for their trip. When two out of every three* air travelers say they have been surprised by hidden fees at the airport, you know the current system is broken and needs to be fixed.

Airlines should have to share their fees with every traveler, through every ticketing channel in which they participate, to every point of sale. With the airline world of fees so complex with so many variations on each fee, this is the only way consumers can compare prices on the total cost of travel.

The airlines have every right to make a fair profit and set fares and fees that allow them to do so. But they have no right to try to hide those prices from their customers.

Thank you for your continued support of airline consumers.

Sincerely,

Charles Leocha
Director
Consumer Travel Alliance

Susan Grant
Director of Consumer Protection
Consumer Federation of America

Sally Greenberg
Executive Director
National Consumers League

Trevor Garrod
Chairman, European
Passengers' Federation

*Consumer Travel Alliance survey conducted among 1,396 air travelers from August 20-31, 2010