



U.S. TRAVEL
ASSOCIATION®

June 26, 2025

The Honorable Russell Vought
Director
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Director Vought:

On behalf of the U.S. travel and aviation industry, we commend the Administration for proposing an end to the diversion of the September 11th Security Fee in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Budget. Ensuring air traveler fees are used for their intended purpose is a vital first step toward transforming aviation security. To fully realize the benefits of ending the fee diversion, it is essential that the September 11th Security Fee collections are invested directly into aviation security programs as a supplement to the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) appropriations rather than an offset.

For more than a decade, a significant portion of the September 11th Security Fee—paid by air travelers with the expectation that it would support aviation security—has been diverted to pay for unrelated federal spending. This practice has delayed critical security modernization efforts. Further, this diversion represents a clear misalignment between the fees paid by travelers and how those funds are used. Ending this diversion will enhance security, airport efficiency, and the overall travel experience without increasing costs for the traveler.

As the United States prepares to welcome the world for a historic decade of major events—including the 2026 FIFA World Cup, America 250, and the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games—the need to modernize the travel system is paramount. These events present a unique opportunity to showcase the country and deliver a secure, efficient, and seamless travel experience.

Modernizing TSA screening operations at airport security checkpoints across the nation with an adequate number of personnel must be a central component of this effort. Furthermore, deploying next-generation technologies—including Computed Tomography (CT) baggage scanners, enhanced on-person screening systems, Credential Authentication Technology (CAT), and Checked Baggage Explosive Detection Systems—would dramatically enhance both security effectiveness and operational efficiency across America's aviation system.

These advanced technologies will streamline government operations by automating manual processes and enabling officers to focus on higher risk items. Additionally, they will allow travelers to carry larger liquids, leave electronics and IDs in their bags, and keep their shoes, jackets, and belts on—delivering faster, less intrusive, and more effective screening while significantly improving the travel experience.

We again commend the FY2026 DHS Budget proposal to end the diversion of the September 11th Security Fee, and we respectfully urge the Administration to work with Congress to implement the Budget proposal while ensuring that ending the fee diversion results in a supplemental investment in aviation security rather than an offset. Restoring the fee to its intended purpose would unlock funding to deploy advanced screening technologies to every airport security checkpoint lane nationwide during President Trump's Administration. This would enable the United States to deliver a world-class aviation security system as we welcome millions of travelers for high-profile, global events.

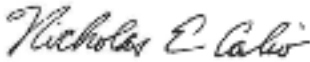
Sincerely,



Geoff Freeman
President and CEO
U.S. Travel Association



Todd Hauptli
President and CEO
American Association
of Airport Executives



Nicholas E. Calio
President and CEO
Airlines for America



Kevin M. Burke
President and CEO
Airports Council International
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Cc: The Honorable Kristi Noem
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Ha Nguyen McNeill
Acting Administrator
Transportation Security Administration