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Wayne County Airport Authority Statement on Actions to End Air Traffic Control Furloughs

-- Short-term solution presents long-term liability for travelers

DETROIT (April 26, 2013)—Wayne County Airport Authority (WCAA), operator of **Detroit Metropolitan Airport (DTW)** and **Willow Run Airport (YIP)**, is relieved that **Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)** air traffic controller furloughs will soon end, returning our nation's air transportation system to full capacity. However, the Airport Authority remains concerned that legislation approved today is nothing more than a short-term solution that merely pushes air travel delays down the road.

While few delays were recorded specifically due to furloughs in Detroit's air traffic control facilities, Detroit passengers were nonetheless impacted by furloughs throughout the country. The travel and financial impacts over the last week for passengers, airlines, and airports were substantial, and if such impacts continued, there would have been a devastating negative economic effect on our nation.

The legislation approved by Congress ends furloughs by reallocating money from the **Airport Improvement Program (AIP)**--which is funded by passengers to maintain and enhance airport runways and taxiways--to go toward air traffic controller salaries. As a result, airports' ability to fund critical future infrastructure improvements will likely be hampered, ultimately resulting in the same slow-down of our nation's aviation system that the furloughs have caused.

WCAA, along with airport operators across the country, instead supported other common sense bipartisan legislation that did not use AIP to eliminate the furloughs. Airports agree that passenger delays and inconvenience cannot continue, but raiding capital funding to pay for FAA operations is unprecedented and does not take into account the need to make critical safety, security and capacity improvements. Sadly, Congress missed an opportunity to allow airports to generate local funding for these necessary projects through raising the Passenger Facility Charge (PFC) user fee, which would have offset the cut to AIP funding.

WCAA, as part of an industry-wide effort to support the needs of airport customers and communities, will continue to work with Congress to obtain critical infrastructure funding to ensure airports can meet passenger safety and security needs as well as continue to generate jobs and economic development in hundreds of communities throughout the United States.

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