



**RICK SCOTT**  
GOVERNOR

September 20, 2012

The Honorable Janet Napolitano  
Secretary of Homeland Security  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Madame Secretary:

I would like to bring your attention to a serious situation concerning U.S. Customs and Border Protection staffing at Miami International Airport (MIA), which has the potential to damage Florida's image and international business competitiveness. Miami International Airport is the number one airport in the country for international flights and is second only to John F. Kennedy International Airport in international enplanements. Ninety-seven percent of all international airline passengers arrive in Florida at MIA.

The hard-working team at MIA stands ready to play a key role in welcoming the increased visitors that are expected to come as a result of the President's January executive order to increase travel and tourism to the United States. This initiative should be a boon for Miami and our country and could create thousands of new jobs in our state. To accommodate the expected increase in international passengers, MIA invested over \$180 million dollars in a new, state-of-the-art Federal Inspection Services (FIS) facility, which was inaugurated in July 2012.

In 2006, Miami International was selected as one of 20 airports in the country to be a Model Port. The goals of the Model Ports program were straightforward and included ensuring that passengers entering the United States were welcomed by Customs and Border Protection officers with respect, that the Customs waiting areas were calm and pleasant and that the Customs process was streamlined.

Unfortunately, the Model Port program goals are not currently being met in MIA's new FIS Facility because of insufficient Customs and Border Protection (CBP) staffing. Written comments often describe the MIA experience as "chaotic." In addition to the passport control lanes not being adequately staffed, the exits from Customs are also insufficiently staffed by CBP officers, which results in a bottleneck for passengers trying to exit the facility.

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In preparation for the opening of the new FIS facility, MIA commissioned an industrial engineering firm to study line management and to model queuing configurations to maximize efficiencies in the FIS. MIA officials worked with local CBP officials in this study. The engineering models and recommendations reflected that for optimal operations, a minimum of 62 of the 72 lanes must be staffed at peak arrival periods.

CBP has not been able to meet the necessary staffing numbers in the new facility. As a result, customers, often numbering well over 1,000 daily, and their baggage are misconnected and must be re-booked on later flights, many leaving the next day.

This problem could potentially do considerable damage to Florida's international competitiveness, which could adversely affect job creation in our state. Over one million jobs in Florida depend on international trade and investment, and this is one of the healthiest and fastest growing sectors of our economy.

As the efficient operation of MIA is a critical component of job creation in our state, I invite you to take a first-hand look at MIA's new FIS facility and the current challenges they face due to insufficient CBP staffing. The wonderful team at MIA, led by Airport Director Jose Abreu, stands ready to offer you a closer look at what we believe is a condition that warrants attention at the highest level; one which I am confident can be rectified with your assistance.

I want to thank you in advance for your assistance in helping us resolve this very critical issue for Florida.

Sincerely,



Rick Scott  
Governor