

TTD NEWS RELEASE

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Labor Movement Rallies to Ground Norwegian Air International Operating Scheme

Urges White House, DOT to Protect Middle Class Aviation Jobs

WASHINGTON, DC — Hundreds of aviation professionals, union leaders and members of the Congress gathered to call on the Obama Administration to “Deny NAI” at a rally outside the White House today.

The rally is in response to the Department of Transportation’s ill-advised April 15 move to [tentatively grant](#) Norwegian Air International’s (NAI) application for a foreign air carrier permit that would allow the company to operate air service to U.S. markets in direct violation of America’s aviation trade rules with the European Union.

“NAI is a rogue business model that shouldn’t receive the blessing of our government to violate the U.S.-EU air services agreement and eviscerate labor standards here and in Europe,” said TTD President Edward Wytkind. “NAI’s plan is to scour the globe for cheap labor and lax employment and tax laws in violation of the labor protections negotiated into the U.S.-EU accord by the Obama Administration.”

“We must stop rewarding corporations that don’t play by the rules. Granting NAI access to the U.S. undermines fair competition, threatens good jobs and sends the message that it’s okay to ignore trade agreements and trample the rights of working people,” said Liz Shuler, AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer. “The Administration must act responsibly and deny NAI’s application.”

Since 2013, TTD, along with a [bipartisan Congress](#) and coalition of European and U.S. airlines and labor unions has staunchly opposed the application, which wrongly rewards NAI’s flag-of-convenience business model. The airline has registered its corporate headquarters in Ireland – to avoid Norway’s employment and tax laws – and will employ flight crews under short-term employment contracts in Singapore or Thailand, where labor standards are poor.

TTD and its allies have argued that this model violates the strong labor provisions in the U.S.-EU Open Skies Agreement, the aviation trade agreement the Obama Administration negotiated with the European Union in 2010. Article 17 *bis* of that agreement states that the “opportunities created by the Agreement are not intended to undermine labor standards or the labor-related rights and principles contained in the Parties’ respective laws.”

“Letting this kind of perverse business model stand will destroy the strong middle-class living standards U.S. aviation professionals have worked decades to achieve, and opens the floodgates for other bottom-feeding carriers with no regard for quality jobs,” Wytkind said. “We’re here to call on the DOT to live up to its trade agreements — and protect American jobs at U.S. airlines that actually play by the rules — by grounding NAI.”

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Edward Wytkind, President / Larry I. Willis, Secretary-Treasurer



TTD was joined at the rally by the AFL-CIO, the Air Line Pilots Association, the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA, the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, the Transport Workers Union and other labor organizations.

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The Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO, (TTD) provides a bold voice for workers in every mode of transportation devoted to protecting middle-class jobs, expanding collective bargaining, and ensuring modern, safe, and secure transportation operations and infrastructure. For more information, visit us at www.ttd.org.

TTD is part of a labor alliance, representing over 200,000 aviation workers, calling on the Obama administration to enforce U.S. trade agreements and defend good jobs and fair competition. Find out more at ttd.org/denynai and #DenyNAI.